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WITH A TRACK-BY-TRACK
REVIEW OF THE ALBUM

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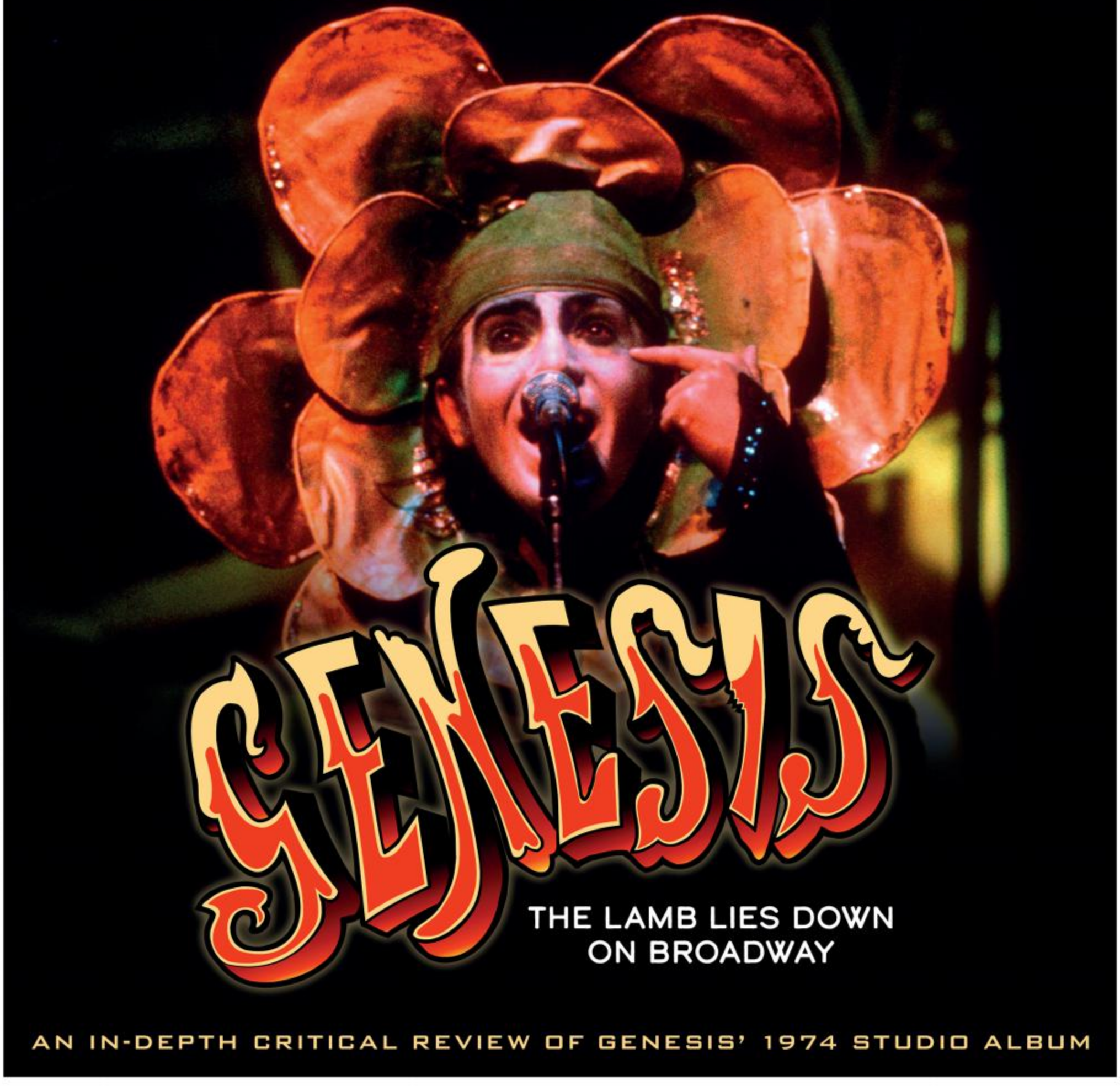
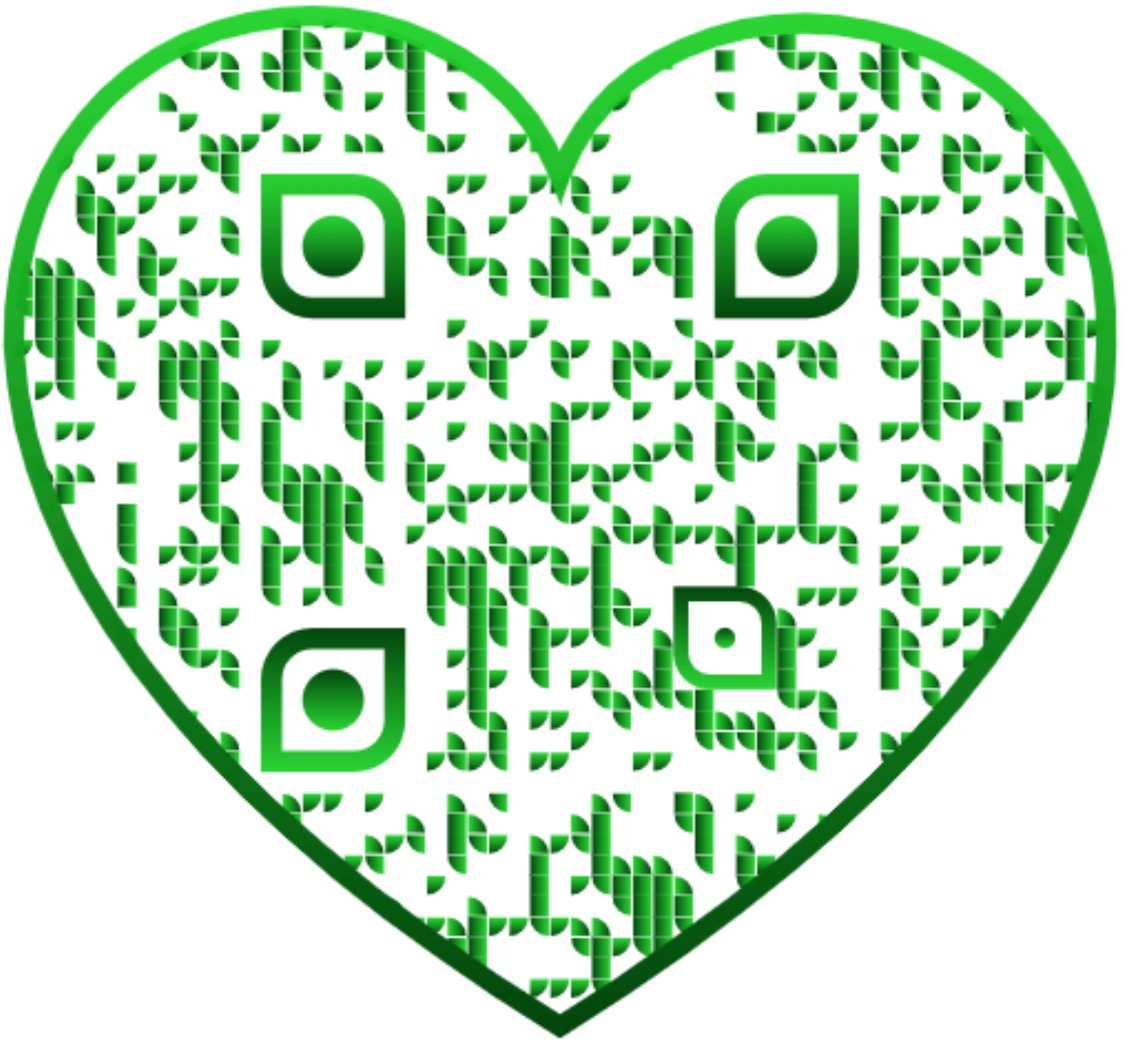


GENESIS

THE LAMB LIES DOWN ON BROADWAY

AN IN-DEPTH CRITICAL REVIEW OF GENESIS' 1974 STUDIO ALBUM



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THE LAMB LIES DOWN ON BROADWAY

The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway was Genesis' fifth 'proper' studio album. Released in November 1974, the album had taken most of summer to complete. The feeling within the band was that this was by far their strongest effort to date, as Peter Gabriel said at the time: 'This album has spirit. It's a much wider album than past efforts. In the past our records haven't come off as strong as I would have liked; it's been down to live performances. But this is the best the band has to offer.'

Despite this enthusiasm, Peter Gabriel was straining at the ties that bound him to Genesis. Gabriel overflowed with lyrical and musical ideas and it was becoming apparent that something would have to give. Tensions were certainly growing as Gabriel wanted complete control over the lyrics and the central concept of the album. In contrast to the English subject matter of the previous albums, *The Lamb* told the story of a New York Street Punk; but not always in the most cohesive manner.

In November 1974 Peter Gabriel finally took the decision to leave Genesis, but before he did so, Gabriel played a major part in the creation of *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*. *The Lamb* is often regarded as the peak of Genesis' recording achievements, certainly from the Gabriel-era. This is somewhat paradoxical, as the album was not well received at the time by either critics or the band's growing fan base.

It is a paradoxical album in many other respects. It is regarded in some quarters as the ultimate progressive rock album, albeit that it was made up largely of relatively short songs without too much in the way of the instrumental bombast commonly associated with this oft-maligned genre. Its sound has more in common, in many ways, with 1980s Genesis, yet at the same time it is held up by long-time fans as the example of what they left behind.

It's an album in which Peter Gabriel's lyrical influence was at a peak, and the promotional tour for the album was followed by his permanent departure from the band. It was a work that the remaining members appeared to put to one side, with the following album (*A Trick of the Tail*) seeming to signal a return to a more traditional Genesis sound.

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A track-by-track review of

THE LAMB LIES DOWN ON BROADWAY

by Hugh Fielder & Friends

Hugh Fielder (Esteemed Rock Journalist and Author): The album's differing production style from its predecessors may be due to the involvement of Brian Eno, who was responsible for many of the treatments on Gabriel's voice. The cover art also took a step back from what had become accepted as a Genesis trademark and employed black and white photographs of Rael (the story's hero) on a white background. The sleeve was also adorned with a new Genesis logo.

The story of the album – often described as a tale of self-redemption – was assisted by the inclusion of an essay penned by Gabriel. However, this seems to be written to help the listener follow the lyrical content as the tale would be more difficult to follow using only the songs.

Like many other concept albums, *The Lamb* labours to tell its story successfully over four sides of vinyl, although the continuity pieces of the like that tended to weaken the Who's *Tommy* are mostly instrumental and thus work better here. As a whole, it probably promises a lot more than it is able to deliver and it was also not as cohesive live as *Tommy* proved to be. It loses a bit of steam through the second half but, nevertheless, remains a powerful piece of music which has probably aged better than other Genesis albums from the 1970s.

Chris Welch (Celebrated Music Journalist, Critic and Author): *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway* was scheduled to be a blockbuster. This was to be the album that would finally establish Genesis as not just a cult band playing at the local town hall, but an international group. At the same time it was to be the album that would really take the basis of the group that was creating these set pieces like *Supper's Ready*, one stage further – the ultimate *Supper's Ready* would be *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*.

Malcolm Dome (Veteran Journalist and Founder of TotalRock Radio): Genesis were always going to do a concept album. I don't think there was ever any doubt when you look at the fact that they had the enormous pieces of music like *The Knife, Supper's Ready* and so forth. They were always preparing themselves for the moment when they were going to do this great concept, every prog-rock band has it, and why not Genesis?

Michael Heatley (Journalist and Biographical Author): Most people think that Peter Gabriel wrote all the lyrics for Genesis, and that wasn't actually true. But, for *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*, because it was such a conceptual piece, he really did contribute almost all the lyrics. In fact all the lyrics as far as I know, this was because he was acting out a part and he wanted to put the words into his own mouth.

In many ways the Gabriel era of Genesis split up at just the right time, it went out on a high with *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway* – I think everybody now looks on that as a real classic album. Obviously punk rock was about to rear its spiky head, and bands like Genesis would suddenly become rather unfashionable. Certainly Peter Gabriel had said that he saw punk rock was coming and that he didn't want to be a stadium band. He said he saw the bands like Emmerson, Lake & Palmer, and Jethro Tull, as being like the Titanic and didn't want to go down with that ship. Therefore he cast adrift

at probably the right time, and obviously Genesis showing they could survive without him gave a good result for both parties.

The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway

A powerful opener which still found its way into the live sets performed in the post-Gabriel era. An atmospheric opening building around Tony Banks' piano (his instrumental work dominates the album over the guitars of Hackett and Rutherford) leads into an unusually aggressive verse, which quickly shows that this is not the same Genesis of previous albums. Overlooked as a single, an edited version of this might have had better luck than *Counting Out Time*.

The song sets the scene for what is to follow, describing early-morning Manhattan with Rael – a teenage Puerto Rican immigrant and gang member – appearing from the subway hiding the spray gun he's been using to graffiti the walls. Rael sees himself as something different, and better, than the other people on the streets who are either finishing up for the evening or starting the day.

The song closes with a reference to the Drifters' *On Broadway* – credits apparently being unnecessary in the days before people found it impossible to write a song without using someone else's ideas.

Fly on a Windshield

A short-linking track with wistful vocals from Gabriel depicting Rael in Times Square feeling that something momentous is about to happen, comparing himself to the hovering fly waiting for the windshield of the oncoming car.

Broadway Melody of 1974

The first of many tracks to feature Gabriel's voice treated by Brian Eno. This treatment was used very effectively throughout the album, not only to make the narrative distinct but also to enhance the impact of the melodies on some of the softer pieces. This does seem

to be simply to allow Gabriel to utilise some clever rhyming based around iconic figures.

Cuckoo Cocoon

A beautifully melodic guitar-driven ballad again enhanced by Eno's treatment of Gabriel's vocals. Rael has been captured and is speculating where he is and what his fate might be. Gabriel provides a delicate flute solo to add the icing to the cake, and Banks' piano fills out the sound as the piece progresses.

In the Cage

One of the few pieces from the album that survived onstage beyond the initial tour when the album was played in its entirety. It opens with a heartbeat played on bass and a quiet opening verse until Banks' organ builds in intensity and Collins' percussion (excellent throughout) leads the song into its verse.

One of the longer pieces on the album, the lyrics are important to the unfolding of the tale, but you do really need to follow these using the booklet as the words are sung rather indistinctly by Gabriel.

Rael has found himself trapped in a cage and the song describes his increasing desperation. He sees his brother John outside the cage but, despite his efforts to attract his attention, he does not see Rael. The cage dissolves and Rael's body starts spinning.

The song also features a thrilling instrumental middle section with an initially funky synthesiser from Banks which flows into one of his trademark melodic solos. There's also another film reference in this song: this time it's *Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head* from *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*.

The Grand Parade of Lifeless Packaging

A percussive piano-led song again featuring Gabriel's voice treated and multi-tracked. The song itself describes the place Rael has found himself, a place where some of the people of Manhattan are held for

servicing as their lives are pre-determined for them so as to ensure the 'appropriate balance' is maintained. Along the way, he sees his brother, who is marked Number 9, along with some of his fellow gang members. Fearing for his safety, he runs from the hall. As he does not appear to be pursued, he starts to think about the life he has left behind.

Back in N.Y.C.

A heartbeat effect opens this piece,one of the least typical tunes on the album. Indeed, 'tune' is stretching it a little as Gabriel yells over a heavy, repeating synthesiser riff. Although light in melody, the synthesiser keeps the interest high with its relentless progress.

The song has Rael describing himself as a tough guy and tells of his experiences on the streets of Manhattan. However, despite this hard exterior he still found himself cuddling a sleeping porcupine on the way back from one of his adventures.

Hairless Heart

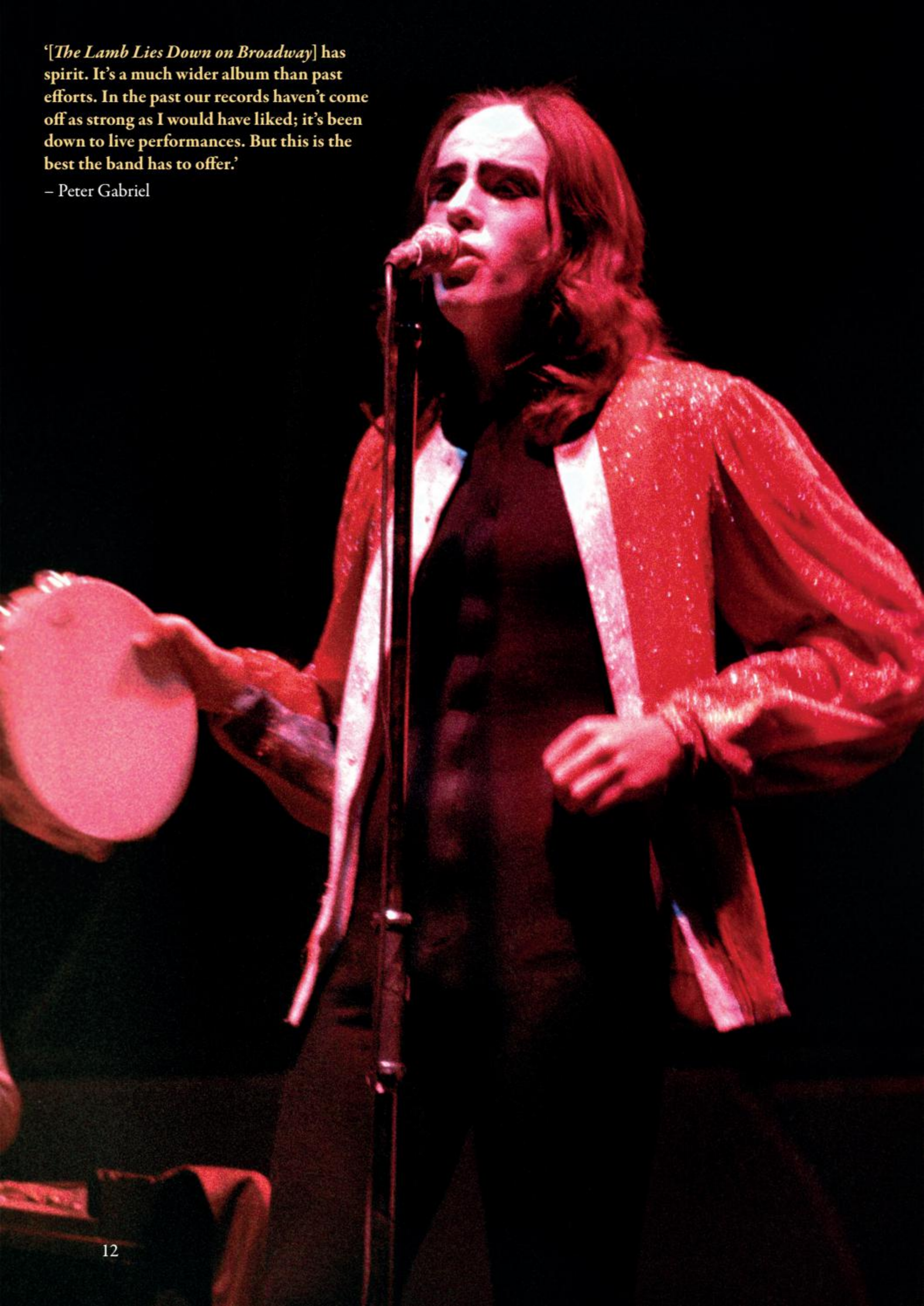
The intensity of *Back In N.Y.C.* is relieved by this brief but beautiful instrumental which would not be out of place as part of one of the band's previous epics. Rael's hairy heart is shaved smooth to the sound of this music and then replaced in his body, where it starts to beat faster. (This image was used as a back-projection in the stage show.)

Counting Out Time

Rael recalls his first romantic encounter in this appealing song which was released as a single. It didn't worry the singles charts much and didn't receive much in the way of airplay – which is not too surprising given the lyrical content. The song recounts Rael's attempts to turn everything he has read about sex into practice on a real girl. All to no avail, of course, as the girl ultimately rejects his advances and Rael makes do with some more personal satisfaction.

'[*The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*] has spirit. It's a much wider album than past efforts. In the past our records haven't come off as strong as I would have liked; it's been down to live performances. But this is the best the band has to offer.'

– Peter Gabriel



Carpet Crawlers

A gorgeous slow song which could easily have found itself on a previous album and which was also re-recorded for the band's greatest hits collection. Although not a percussive number as such, Collins' shimmering hi-hat drives the music forward towards its climax; he also adds a distinctive and effective harmony on the chorus.

Rael now finds himself in a different corridor where the inhabitants are all straining to reach for the flight of stairs at the end. However, he is able to move more freely than the crawlers and so makes his way to and through the door at the top of the stairs.

The Chamber of 32 Doors

One of the more atypical songs on the album, the song opens with Mellotron and an almost bluesy guitar. There are many changes in tempo during the song with an initial fast pace dropping down to a slow and quiet section with Gabriel's vocals sounding like they are coming from a deep place. It then breaks into a bright chorus as Rael tries to work out whom he can best trust. The song repeats the cycle once more to its conclusion. As the halfway point of the tale, you can almost sense the curtain close for intermission with Gabriel's closing exhortation to 'take me away'.

Rael has found himself in a chamber where there are thirty-two doors but only a single exit that will let him out. How he can decide?

Lilywhite Lilith

Probably the poppiest song on *The Lamb*, this starts the album's second half off brightly. It could have been another contender as a single, but given the continuing narrative the closing section would have made little sense in isolation.

Rael has come across a pale-skinned blind woman who is able to lead him out of the chamber as her lack of sight means that she is able to guide him using the breezes. Successfully completed, she leaves Rael in another cave with an assurance that he should wait there.

The Waiting Room

This instrumental piece is an interpretation of Rael's fear and trepidation as he waits alone in the cave. Ultimately, he panics and throwing a stone in the direction of a lit tunnel he hears the sound of glass breaking around the cave. On stage, this piece was largely improvised each night.

Anyway

Based around Banks' piano this builds into one of the more underrated songs on the album. Gabriel deals with the wordy lyrics which also test his range more than is usual for Genesis material. In a lively instrumental section the song also contains the album's first guitar solo of note. *Anyway* is a very busy song at just over three minutes long.

Rael has found himself stuck in another cave, and is beginning to accept that he is about to die.

Here Comes the Supernatural Anaesthetist

Although lyrically a very slight piece, the instrumental tension between the strummed guitar and the lead-guitar melody, underpinned by the keyboards, makes this an appealing track.

The Supernatural Anaesthetist is Death or, to be more precise, the disguise that Death wears. Death approaches Rael carrying a cylinder from which he puffs a mysterious gas in Rael's face before walking away.

The Lamia

A song with all the majesty of older tracks like *Firth of Fifth*, and with a melody that would have been perfectly at home on *Nursery Cryme*, this has all the hallmarks of Tony Banks and is one of the few tracks on *The Lamb* that can be so identified. Although the large majority of the lyrics were written by Gabriel, a couple were contributed by others and this might well be a Banks composition. At just short of

seven minutes, this is the third longest individual piece on the album, and includes a wonderfully lyrical and controlled guitar solo from Hackett, interspersed with Gabriel's flute at the close.

Rael is still alive despite his encounter with Death. He follows a scent and finds a way to a pool where he is approached by three beautiful but reptilian females who encourage him to drink from it. As he drinks, the Lamia start to devour his body but they die as they taste Rael's blood.

Silent Sorrow in Empty Boats

A gentle and almost ambient instrumental giving musical representation to the death of the Lamia. The title is taken from the lyrics of the previous song.

The Colony of Slippermen (The Arrival/A Visit to the Doktor/Raven)

The longest track of the album takes Genesis fans back into familiar territory if only because it's a song with three distinct parts! A quiet and unusual beginning starts proceedings – almost a hint of eastern influence here – which lasts over a minute and a half before Gabriel introduces the faster-paced middle section with an almost whispered 'bu-be-de-bum'.

The song is another keyboard-dominated piece underpinned by some tricky sounding organ from Tony Banks. As well as Gabriel's famed Slipperman vocal, it also features some dynamic synthesiser soloing.

Although split into three sections, each individual section is more indicative of a change in the narrative rather than a change in the musical content which remains fairly consistent throughout, albeit with some subtle changes of pace.

Rael has found himself in a colony of creatures who have all been through the same experience he has just completed. Like them, his body is a mixture of lumps and bumps. There he meets his brother

John who advises him that the only way out is to visit the Doktor to be castrated. This exercise completed, Rael and John are presented with a necklace of offensive weapons. However, a black raven (which is a distinctly bad omen) steals the necklace from Rael's hands. John says he can't chase the raven because it is such bad luck.

Ravine

This final instrumental of the album gives an aural description of the climax of the chase Rael gives the raven. Another almost ambient piece, this perhaps is more likely to break the listening flow and, as such, contributes to a certain loss of musical momentum over the last half of the work.

Chasing the raven, Rael now find himself on cliffs overlooking a ravine into which the raven has dropped the necklace.

The Light Lies Down on Broadway

The verse and chorus of this song revisit the title track but it's now taken at a more stately pace, and the strength of the underlying melody is emphasised. Opening with organ, this features some of the most gentle of Gabriel's singing which rises to a peak again on the chorus.

Working his way down to the edge of the river, Rael can see the lights of Broadway in the distance and is filled with hope. However, he hears screams and realises his brother John is in difficulty in the rapids.

Riding the Scree

Musically one of the most complex pieces on the album, the underlying 9/8 rhythm remains constant throughout while Tony Banks' characteristic synthesiser lines dance around it, often in completely conflicting time signatures. As solo and backing achieve alignment again, there is a short vocal section before the track fades quietly to a conclusion.

Rael realises he has to make every effort to save his brother, despite having earlier deserted him.

In the Rapids

A quiet start led by strummed acoustic and electric guitars builds in intensity as Gabriel describes Rael's efforts to save his brother. The song itself is somewhat slight and wouldn't justify its existence in its own right. Gabriel's vocals start in a very understated manner but build throughout the song, as does the underlying music.

Rael makes a desperate attempt to save his brother. As he succeeds, John's face changes to that of Rael who, in deciding to save his brother, has saved himself.

If

A soaring synthesiser raises the music out of the relative torpor of the previous song into the album finale, driven by strummed guitars overlaid by synthesiser. Sadly, melody of the song does not fully live up to the rush the music provides.

And what is it? Well, that is entirely up to you, the listener..."

◊

By the time Genesis got round to releasing *The Lamb* the band were no longer strangers to the press or the public. By November 1974 everyone knew who Genesis were and Gabriel was a bona-fide star. Despite the huge demands on their time, the band would always find time for the writers that had been with the band on their journey to the top. Shortly after the album's release the group found time for yet another feature with Barbara Charone.

In keeping with the band's fast rising status this piece was written for the hugely influential *Rolling Stone*. The tame old world of provincial England seemed to be too parochial by half. As the subject matter of the glittering new album focused on the US, so too did the

band. This piece, published on 2 January 1975, was entitled 'Genesis: To Them, It's Only Rock and Role':

'London – Having recently sold England by the pound, Genesis and Atlantic Records now turn their attention to the United States, where the esteemed buck reigns. A Genesis tour is in progress, scheduled to run through February 1st. An accompanying album, *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*, is just now in release.

Tony Banks, the keyboard player, describes the double album as "not really a concept album. It's probably closer to the lyrical content of [the Who's] *Tommy*, rather than [Yes'] *Tales from Topographic Oceans*. "Well, it certainly isn't Peter Gabriel's life work," the lead singer deadpans, adding: "It's more a plot album than a concept album."

"Basically," says a man from Hipgnosis, which designed the cover, "it's a hippie tale about a counter-culture hero's journey inside his own head. But," he adds with authority, "the story is really just a vehicle for the music."

"I don't know what it's about," Phil Collins shakes his head, "I'm just the drummer. Ask Peter..."

If the participants seem a touch vague on the album contents, consider the stage show: five years ago, Genesis first began to flirt with multimedia. Back then lead singer Gabriel performed in pantomime to the group's fairy-tale lyrics. Later embellishments included explosions and dramatic ageing routines a la The Werewolf of London, using masks and elaborate make-up. Backstage in sleazy dressing rooms the group innocently sipped tea and nibbled crumpets.

They have since matured. Pantomime has given way to sophisticated animation, backdrop projections and fuzz boxes.

Optimistically, the group plans to use a hefty chunk of *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway* as the nucleus of their stage act while touring the States, though other groups have exposed their epic presentations to the indignity of yawns and shouts of "start boogie-ing!" Fewer costume changes are expected this time around. They

are expected to rely more on projections, lighting and Peter Gabriel's stage antics.

"We still want to take the listener out of the concert hall and into the fantasy," Gabriel announces, citing last year's Red Buddha Theater multimedia show as a step forward. "Rock visuals have to go beyond serving the extended whims of superstars.

"The concerts should work more like a film. A film would make the story more comprehensible but we're working toward that with the three screens. Most people get onstage and act like they presume themselves to be. But if you're going to occupy a role, you have to discard previous roles and not simply adopt the standard rock pose, a bit like an actor really."

Genesis has set its "plot" album in wild and woolly New York City: "It was a conscious setting," says Gabriel, "because it was important that the main character, Rael, be earthy." (The character's name has come up before: In a recent interview conducted by *Record World*, Peter Townshend says the idea for *Tommy* sprang from a single, Rael, later included on *The Who Sell Out*. (Execs at Atlantic Records describe this as an "incredible coincidence.") Peter Gabriel continues: "It was necessary that he have certain blemishes on his character which were whole and identifiable when taken into a fantasy situation. What fascinated me about New York was the speed and aggression of the city.

"You see things close to you with tainted spectacles," Gabriel adds. "You don't see things under your nose. But the setting is basically a device for making the character real, more extroverted and violent. Adolescents adjust by finding a slot. But Rael is slotless. He feels he's a waste of material – all he can do is give up or escape."

"We were hesitant about putting out a double album, especially a concept album," says Tony Banks, suddenly stumbling on the word. "The songs are related, but they stand up separately as well. You could listen to a few tracks on the radio and get a fair idea what the record's about. You couldn't do that with *Selling England by the Pound*."

Genesis has its audience, but also its critics, who point mockingly at surreal moods and pretentious lyrics. The new album, Gabriel says, will combat that. "It covers a much wider spectrum than our past albums," he says with a half-cocked smile. "On the right wing there are more conventional straight pop songs, and on the left, more sound pictures. It's got the best the band has to offer, a comprehensive selection."

"People think we're more airy-fairy than Yes or ELP," Banks says, "you know, more fey because we don't sweat as much. I think this album will end all those comparisons entirely."

Operating on the principle that they play better in rehearsal than in the studio, Genesis wrote and recorded the album at a rented country cottage in Wales. They used mobile recording equipment.

If the British group has thrown away its crumpets and bowler hats and adopted the raunchy, speedy ethos of New York City, the proof of the pudding will be found in their US tour reception.

They're ready and already hip deep in defence of what the critics might have to say.

"There are people who believe that the costumes, props and slides we use are crutches to hold up the crippled music," Gabriel says casually but cynically. "But you're cheating your audience if you don't allow them to hear the music with the full strength with which it was created. Visuals are rubbish unless they are integrated with the continuity of the music. You can't put layers of make-up on a beautiful face unless the features are there in the first place."

The music is "there" for a sizeable cult audience that has followed Genesis through seven albums since 1969. *Selling England by the Pound* attracted the esteemed buck to the tune of 150,000 sales before the current tour, and, Atlantic says, is again a hot item.'

The tour to promote *The Lamb* was by far the most ambitious undertaking ever attempted by Genesis. The group had always had grand ideas in this direction and had achieved some stunning

moments of rock theatre. Those of us who were there will always remember *The Lamb* as a sensational presentation. One that easily eclipsed the tame efforts of artists such as Bowie who somehow gained a far greater reputation based on a far more slender body of work lacking the genuine son et lumiere impact of the real thing as devised and performed by Gabriel and his band mates.

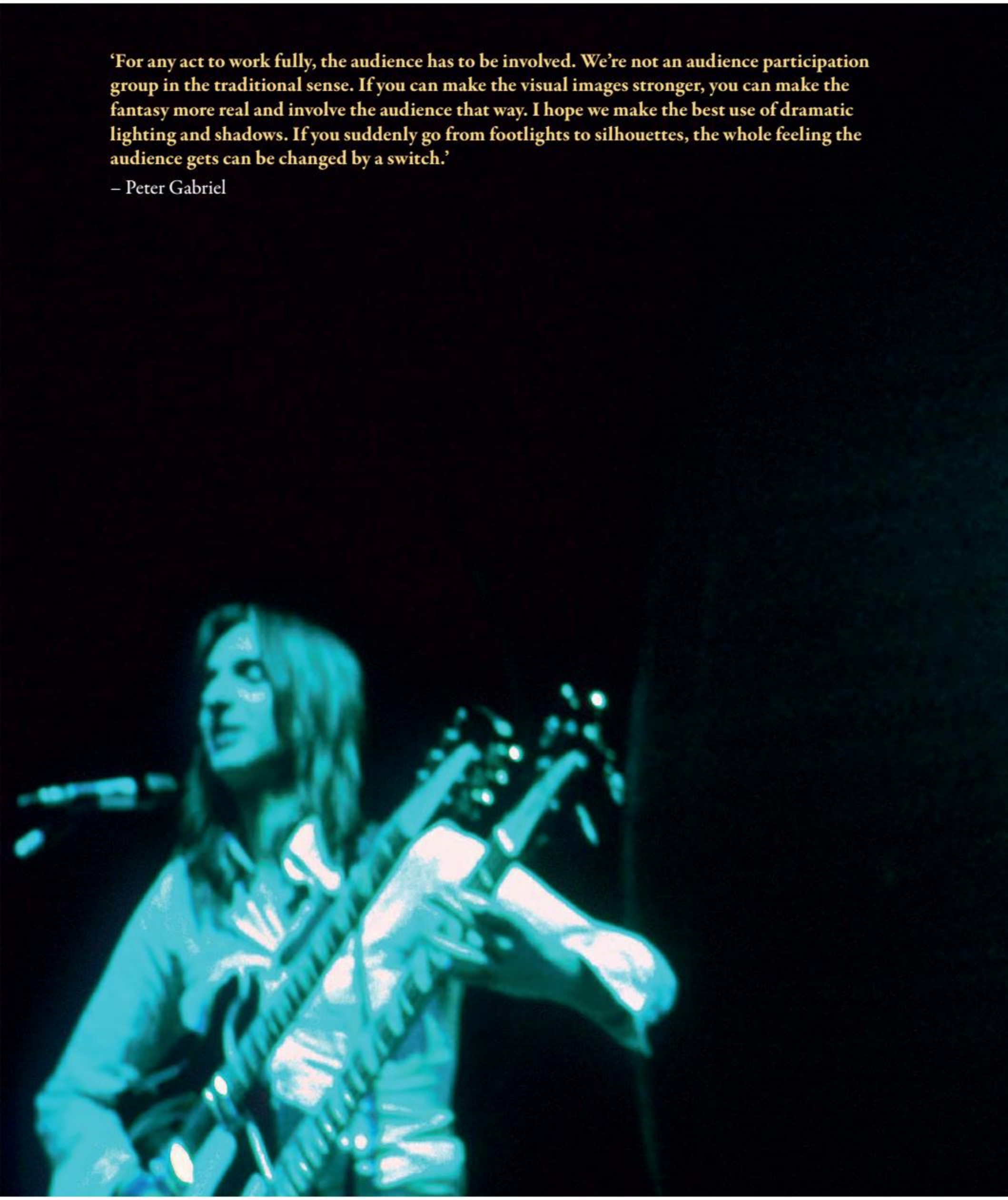
The Lamb Tour took the Genesis stage show to a new level of complexity achieving a genuinely stunning effect on audiences astonished by the well thought out interaction of a brilliant suite of progressive music allied to a mesmerising stage show. Not surprisingly the press were rhapsodic over this sensational presentation which was beautifully complemented by Geoffrey Shaw's wonderfully engaging three screen projections which were not surpassed until the arrival of Pink Floyd's all conquering Wall shows in the next decade. It's interesting to recall too, that one of the key features of The Wall was the three screen projection as pioneered by Geoffrey Shaw for Genesis.

Sadly no professional film record of The Lamb stage shows exists today. For some inexplicable reason no one thought to make a film of a complete show and we are therefore left with just a few scraps of German news footage and some clandestine cine film shot by various fans as our only record of *The Lamb* in the live arena, a rather sad legacy for what was a stunning theatrical achievement. Like the audiences of bygone ages we now have to rely on our fading memories and on the written word to evoke the power and craft and majesty of these wonderful shows. Fortunately Ron Ross writing for *Phonograph Record*, was just one of the music critics who were totally won over by the ambitious stage show which supported the most ambitious album to date. Published in February 1975 this piece was entitled 'Genesis: The Future of Rock Theatre' and now stands as a lasting record of Genesis at their adventurous peak:

'The Lamb is a short story that comprises no fewer than forty-eight different plot movements and a stage show with 3,000 slides

‘For any act to work fully, the audience has to be involved. We’re not an audience participation group in the traditional sense. If you can make the visual images stronger, you can make the fantasy more real and involve the audience that way. I hope we make the best use of dramatic lighting and shadows. If you suddenly go from footlights to silhouettes, the whole feeling the audience gets can be changed by a switch.’

– Peter Gabriel



paralleling the action, both musical and conceptual. So what's a fly dude of Spanish extraction got to do with five well-bred, highly educated and frequently esoteric young Englishmen, with a penchant for moody myths and subtle self-satire?

Could it be that having flirted with seductive naiads and ancient hermaphrodites, Genesis are attempting to be trendy and up-to-the-minute by creating a contemporary Third World character? After all, with Bowie now a disco-dancin' cha cha queen at a time when all the world seems unlimitedly in love with Barry White, who could blame this quaint quintet of scholarly surrealists for hoppin' onto the soul train? If they chose to funk up their music (slightly) and allow Peter Gabriel's image some room to wax aggro, it might well be just another pragmatically conceived bit of play-acting, what? But this particular PR persona is ultimately more than a randomly selected exposé on the psychology of race by a band on the make. Rael serves as a psychologically and morally alienated adolescent with whom Genesis' audience can identify.

With Gabriel now affecting the leather jacket and jeans of a frustrated hitter, fans can more fully enter the group's most extensive and complex fantasy ever. "The New York setting is a device for making the character more real, more extroverted and violent, as the kid goes through these fantastic changes", Gabriel recently explained. "Adolescence is the time you adjust yourself to the world, you either find a slot or reject a slot; you're questioning most things around you. But this guy is slotless; his name is supposed to be raceless. He feels as if he's a waste of material, part of the machinery. He doesn't even think about his position in society. All he can do is escape or give up. He's very aggressive." Hence "Rael Imperial Aerosol Kid", as one of the lyrics would have it.

"The point of Rael being accessible, earthy and aggressive is that he provides an earthy response to these fantasy situations," Gabriel told *Phonograph Record Magazine* hopefully. Rael's purpose being not so much to attract a larger integrated following by virtue of this

ethnicity, but to lure Genesis' existing audience more totally into the illusion and mood all five of the band have worked so carefully to project throughout their career. *Supper's Ready* on *Foxtrot* (their fourth album) had proven Genesis' ability to develop a musical mood for twenty minutes at a stretch. Although there had been concept albums in profusion with Yes, ELP, etc. experimenting with side-long suites, only the Beatles, with side two of Abbey Road and Genesis' with *Supper's Ready*, had managed to produce a bandless flow that blended a number of separate musical and lyrical ideas without resorting to lengthy improvisations.

If Genesis were to carry their fables of sex, death, money, dominance and submission even further, they would need a character with whom audiences could relate a bit more closely than a wood nymph or a pre-Raphaelite prince. Guitarist Steve Hackett admitted, "We tend to keep away from the present. We're very hesitant to make any commitment to how we feel about what's happening now." But even before the current R&B boom, Gabriel had expressed the hope that "spending time in America might well change our music for the better by making us seem less isolated in our opinions. Soul music excites me more than rock 'n' roll. There's more emotion and I like the rhythm better. A lot of rock 'n' roll seems to be working at a high speed, but not a high intensity."

So, while *The Lamb* and Rael appear to be a major departure from Genesis' past, especially given Gabriel's radical change of image, the band's motivation and method have remained inherently the same. "Our albums should be in some ways like books, in that you can dip into them when you feel so inclined. Instead of making them being fashionable things you can listen to a lot one month and then discard the next," Gabriel stated unequivocally. So much for unfair accusations of trendy opportunism.

While *The Lamb* seems more conventional on first listening for its divisions into distinct songs (a la *Tommy*), Genesis' most ambitious opus to date makes far more of the band's impressive instrumental

assets than their previous work. It also offers a realistic, built-in mise en scene by which the group can realise yet another of Gabriel's most important goals. "I expect to see groups and artists get together," he once said with a visionary gleam in his eye. "I think the time is nearly ripe for the first visual artist to become a pop star. There will be situations in which the band itself becomes much less important and there will be less of an ego thing. They won't be quite as alone as in an orchestra pit, but somewhere in between that and what exists now." Thus, *The Lamb* show is all the more engrossing for artist Geoffrey Shaw's three-screen slide panorama which cuts from seamy scenes of New York street life to Magritte-like surreality in the blinking of an eye. Even when *The Lamb*'s plot becomes obscure and convoluted, Shaw's slides sustain involvement in the mood of fantasy.

Peter Gabriel himself of course has always been a compelling theatrical presence. At first, Peter was the only member of the band who performed standing. Later, his foxhead, buttercup bonnet, bat's wings and elaborate make-up tended to snatch the headlines away from the group's songs, for which the various props were intended only as dramatic servants. The band's deliberate anonymity had worked so well that few realised just how democratic their creative process really was. Although he is the focal point of a considerable Genesis cult on both sides of the Atlantic, Gabriel makes every effort to avoid the rock star limelight that more extroverted faces revel in. He has his artistic, as well as personal reasons: "With rock it seems a performer's off-stage persona is often more colourful than his onstage character," Peter has complained, citing Mick Jagger as an artist limited by his image as *the* Rolling Stone. Relative personal anonymity provides greater theatrical freedom Gabriel feels, and it's been so effective that when he cut his hair this summer and combed it over his famous bald streak, even his friends failed to recognise him on the street. And Steve Hackett has suggested seriously, "I'd like to feel that if we did have an impact on music, I'd like to change the star syndrome, which lacks self-criticism. Musicians should have

more anonymity, so that there won't be so many people trying so desperately to find star images."

The band's first tour of America coincided with Charisma's release of *Nursery Cryme* through Buddah, who made a strong attempt to break the group via FM airplay. While *The Musical Box* became an instant favourite, with its droll Victorian vignette of murder and revenging rape, Genesis' live act was greeted by some concert-goers with vociferous scepticism and shouts of "Boogie!" during the quieter mood-building instrumental passages. Although Gabriel's cat-like grace, expressive pantomimes and witty introductory monologues were exemplary, if esoteric, rock theatre, Genesis' sophisticated sense of dynamics and pacing was hardly reminiscent of high energy rock 'n' roll. Peter's bald streak and bass drum were either irresistible or ridiculous, depending on how seriously one took them and how seriously one presumed Peter took them. Nevertheless, his mastery of stagecraft was functional as well as singular.

"I didn't feel very at home onstage to begin with," he's confessed. "Audiences shocked us by not being very interested in the music at first. I started to wiggle about trying to personify the lyrics. I had my bass drum to hide behind." (He had originally been a drummer). The monologues were an additional means of bringing audiences into the fantasy while covering inexperience. "We started to use the monologues when we brought twelve-string guitars into the act," Peter explains. "There were long embarrassed silences while the guitars were tuned. The monologues gave me another outlet by which to express the fantasy. The way they should work is to get the audience's mind thinking of fantasy powers; to make the ordinary a bit more strange and vice versa."

In this sense, the Gabriel-penned short story on *The Lamb* sleeve may be viewed as simply a super-monologue. "The story is printed on the album sleeve because it was too all-encompassing for all the songs to contain the action," says the author, "Initially we were going to try to tell the story in lyrics, but it became too much a matter of narrative

action." So Gabriel's whimsical monologues have grown from being a listener's aid to become an integral part of the overall scheme of any Genesis project. The monologues work hand in hand with the show's lighting and the slides to provide as complete an ambience as possible.

Because Rael was Gabriel's boy so to speak, Peter ended up writing almost all of the lyrics, a major departure from Genesis' former "all titles by all" policy. "If the lyrical story was to be continuous, one person had to write all the lyrics and that was Pete," reasoned Banks. The rest of the band concentrated on putting together more music than they had ever before attempted to compose for one album. "If you think in terms of a gigantic jig-saw puzzle, musical bits and pieces that were written months apart by different members of the group just seemed to fit together," Hackett revealed about Genesis' approach to composition. "I think you can join any two pieces of music, provide you find the right bridge passage."

Steve continues, "Peter took more of a back seat in the early stages and just let us get on with it. He was much more concerned with the lyrical side. We did half the music before we decided that Peter should write a story to go with it. We'd been working with the vague lyrical idea of 'the lamb lies down on Broadway'. That line seemed to stay with us. A great deal of music was written in the studio, which we'd never done before, because time was running out on us. Previous to that late stage in *The Lamb*'s development, much of the instrumentation was written in a house in the country and recorded with a mobile unit outside of a formal studio."

While the band was allowing for greater improvisational potential within *The Lamb*, Gabriel was consciously changing his lyrical attitude. In Hackett's opinion, "I think with this album, Peter felt a need to put himself outside himself more than he had in the past. He's felt that Genesis did 'feminine' music quite well; this time he wanted to sound more masculine, to be big and butch."

"Big and Butch" may not exactly describe *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*, but an edge of frustrated teen energy does render

the plot's twists and turns more psychologically consistent. As for the unprecedentedly vivid visuals, Gabriel feels, "For any act to work fully, the audience has to be involved. We're not an audience participation group in the traditional sense. If you can make the visual images stronger, you can make the fantasy more real and involve the audience that way. I hope we make the best use of dramatic lighting and shadows. If you suddenly go from footlights to silhouettes, the whole feeling the audience gets can be changed by a switch." Thus, music lyrics, slides and costumes all clearly inter-relate to allow *The Lamb* show to shift suddenly from realistic to the fantastic and back again. The visuals either reinforce the mood of the music and the meaning of the lyrics or counter them. Peter prefaces each of *The Lamb*'s fur sections with a paraphrase of his short story, which is a remarkably intricate and many-levelled parable itself.

Basically, having lead a life of gratuitous violence committed for his alienated ego's sake, Rael emerges one day from a graffiti binge on the subway only to be mysteriously absorbed into a 'half-world' on the other side of an ominous wall, which settles on Broadway just as The Lamb lies down (never to be heard from again). Once on the other side, he loses control of his destiny, but for his strong will to survive. In the course of the narrative, Rael is buried or trapped several times, and encounters his brother John repeatedly, as well as a strange assortment of frightening creatures, including seductive snake women; Lilywhite Lilith, a blind guide who leads him out of one dilemma in to another; the hideous Slippermen; the Supernatural Anesthetist (Death, "in a light disguise he made himself"); and Doktor Dyper, whose speciality is castration. One of *The Lamb*'s most complete multi-media moments comes during the *Cuckoo Cocon/In the Cage* sequence. Rael comes out of a coma to become aware that a bizarre cage of stalactites and stalagmites is trapping him. As Gabriel sings, "I'm drowning in a liquid fear," Rael see the face of his brother John outside of the cage. The slides depict, in an almost animated form, John's face in two dimensions with red

blood dripping down his black and white features. Gabriel himself has temporarily shed his jacket and jeans to perform half nude on a set that provides several different levels from which he can hold forth. As Rael perceives a series "of cages joined to form a star," a spidery web of pale light engulfs the players. So ethereal is the music that is seems to emanate out of the air. No amplifiers are visible.

The staging of *Counting Out Time* provides a cleverly satirical counterpoint to the plot's heavier moods. As Gabriel warbles a tune "conceived as a light hearted look at the insertion of male organs into female organs," the slide screen offers various views of the female anatomy complete with arrows and guide numbers. *The Carpet Crawlers* sequence that follows is a montage of Shaw's design that reflects his familiarity with surrealist painting in plastic fantasy fashion.

Yet the burden of visual representation is not completely on the slide show. Although Gabriel intentionally chose conventional garb in which to portray Rael, he also takes on the character of the mutant Slipperman, with his inflatable dong and "lips that slide across each chin." Completely enveloped by the most revolting costume ever, Gabriel as Slipperman crawls out of a glowing pink plastic tube and proceeds to hop around like a birth defective toddler.

At other points the lyrics and/or the slides refer to Marlene Dietrich, Caryl Chessman, Martin Luther King, Lenny Bruce and Timothy Leary, all in connection with Rael's plight. There are references to the Drifters *On Broadway* and Del Shannon's *Runaway*. Though *The Lamb* is in many ways as idiomatically American a work as *Selling England by the Pound* was British, these references are not meant to be token allusions to rock and roll history or pop culture. "Most of us were too young to catch the fifties era and have a certain reverence for rock 'n' roll," Gabriel says realistically. "There's a hell of a lot of bad music in rock 'n' roll. I felt that the Beatles and the Stones weren't identified in my mind with rock 'n' roll. When I was fifteen I didn't want hand-me-down music. I wanted something new."

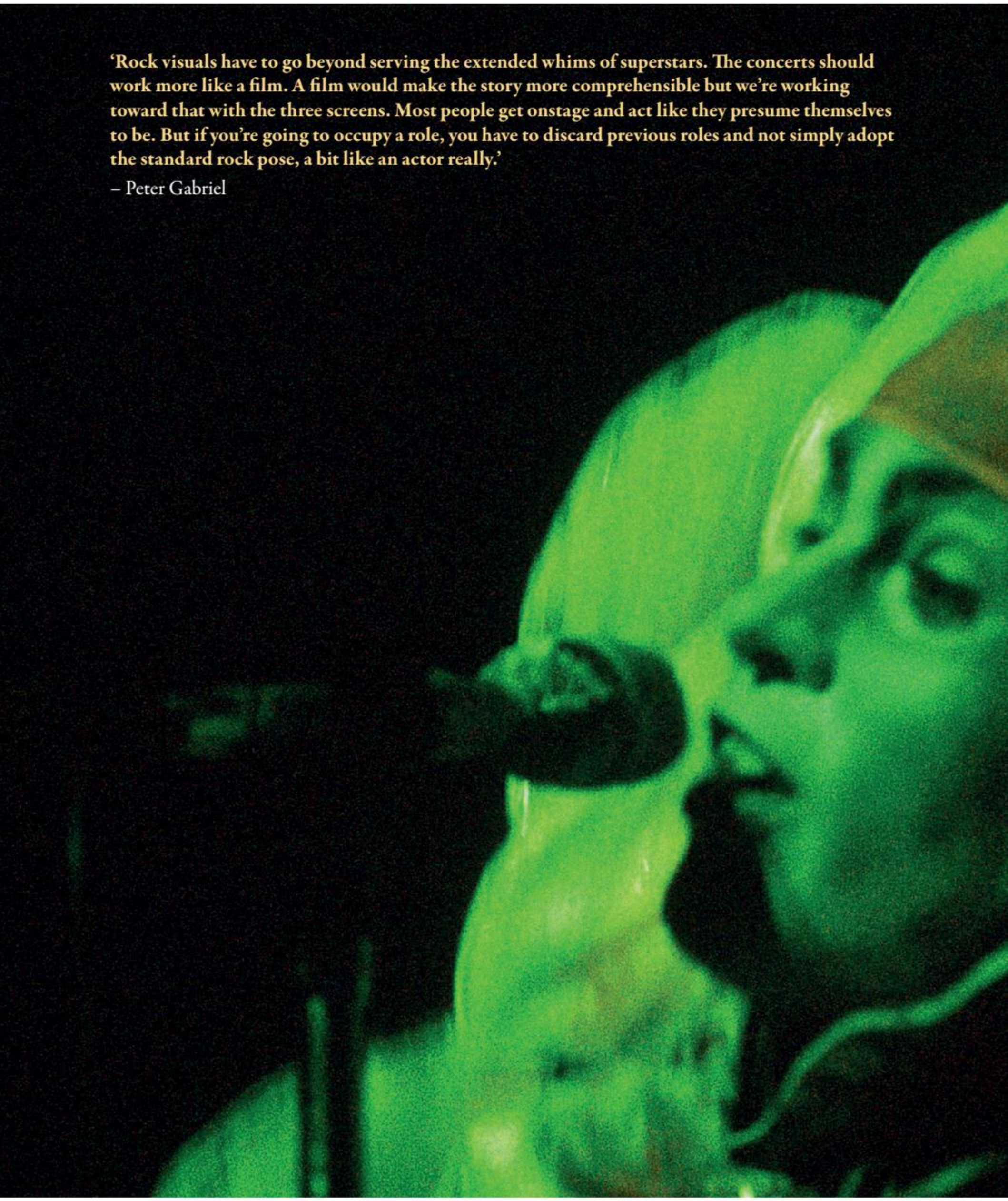
For a growing legion of fans Genesis are that "something new". As Peter himself has pointed out about the competition "Alice Cooper's show seems to dominate everything. Everything, including music is subservient to the impression he tries to make on the audience. Bowie creates a fantasy situation and plays his songs from it, rather than building situations out of the songs, which is what we want to do. We are a band that tells stories with our material, with visual effects helping extend the mood. Genesis are the fantasies we set up." And what, after all did Elvis and the Beatles have to offer, if not the fantasy of power, potent sexuality and teen unity? These are not ideas foreign to Genesis, but Gabriel and company are expressing them in terms at once more lyrically conceptual and visually visceral. Genesis' peculiarly British aptitude for satire compares favourably with that of The Who or the Kinks, their musical approach is on a par with King Crimson or Yes, and Gabriel is easily one of the best actors in rock, along with Alice and Bowie.

Solo albums and perhaps film work for Gabriel appear to be in Genesis' future. Yet Gabriel remains committed to the positive synergism that Genesis as a band embodies. "Our creative process is a democratic one." he asserts. "Many roads lead to the same end. As long as the group has an audience, I won't worry about which aspects seem to stand out to different people."'

Soon after this piece was published Ron Ross made the switch to *Circus* magazine which at the time was a hugely influential music journal. It will come as no surprise to readers to note that one of his first pieces to appear was also about Genesis, *The Lamb* and the band's attempt to sell the album to the country which had spawned the concept in the first place. Ron was an articulate supporter of the band and he was fully behind the reasons why the group felt that it was important to present *The Lamb* as a single coherent (well as coherent as it gets!) work. His March 1975 article for *Circus* was entitled 'Will America Swallow The Lamb? Why Genesis wouldn't

'Rock visuals have to go beyond serving the extended whims of superstars. The concerts should work more like a film. A film would make the story more comprehensible but we're working toward that with the three screens. Most people get onstage and act like they presume themselves to be. But if you're going to occupy a role, you have to discard previous roles and not simply adopt the standard rock pose, a bit like an actor really.'

– Peter Gabriel



chop up *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*'. It featured an extensive interview with Peter Gabriel, and although at that time he was still regarded as a member of Genesis, the benefit of hindsight lays out the clues to the future split for all to see:

'For years Genesis had dreamed of cooking up their most powerful of surreal visuals and mesmerising music. Yet they feared their ambitious new double album might prove too intense for in-concert consumption.

Peter Gabriel stared at himself in his dressing room mirror and methodically began to wipe off the layers of dusky make-up that only a few hours before had transformed him into a young Puerto Rican New Yorker named Rael.

In the course of Genesis' startling two hour performance, Peter had further mutated from a leather-jacketed street punk to the hideously deformed Slipperman, finally becoming an eerie silhouette of Death Himself. But now, as he washed the last of the tan paint from his distinctively British features, Gabriel began to look once again very much like the private school student he was when Genesis was first formed – not at all like the all-powerful Watcher of the Skies whose bat-wings seemed smoky gray from hell-fire.

Dressed more like an un-stylish fan than a rock star on the ascendant, Peter wrapped a plain wool muffler around his neck and stepped out the stage door into the chilly New Jersey night air. There a strange sight greeted him. Outside a corral of previously prepared police barricades were dozens of believers in the magic that is Genesis. At their first glimpse of Gabriel, the throng began to cry "Peter! Peter!" and strained toward their favourite fantasy-monger. As he hurried into the waiting limousine, the habitually reserved musical sorcerer began to smile broadly; the long black auto-coach pulled away from the crowd, and still the hands beat upon its roof and eager faces peered curiously in the windows for a look at what their hero was really like. Peter settled back, began to peel a refreshing orange, and sighed. Despite his well-hidden

anxiety, Genesis' newest and most ambitious stage presentation had worked.

American rock audiences at first had been inclined to heckle Peter's subtly atmospheric monologues, chattering during the quieter mood-building instrumental passages. After three carefully planned tours, however, even the most sceptical concert-goers were entranced by Genesis' dramatic representation of *The Musical Box* and Peter's breath-taking flight through the air at the climax of *Supper's Ready*. Now *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway* had replaced those old favourites, and even Peter's image had changed drastically. He had cropped his long locks and combed them over his bald streak. His sleek black jumpsuit had given way to sneakers and blue-jeans. Though the band had given their all to provide a totally entertaining re-enactment of some of their most imaginative songs ever, the insistent question remained. Aside from the success of their first few concerts with *The Lamb*, could Genesis convince the world's largest rock audience to take an extended trip into an unfamiliar fantasy world?

Back in his Manhattan hotel room, Peter admitted to *Circus* that Genesis had had their doubts about presenting the entirety of their recent double album as the basis for the most important tour of their career. "We were quite worried about introducing the whole of *The Lamb* to audiences all at once. This new show is very experimental for us," Gabriel acknowledged, biting into a banana. "In the past we've tried to introduce new material in twenty-five minute segments, phasing it in with the better known songs gradually. It's also been difficult achieving a balance between the musical performance and the triple-screen slide presentation that helps the listener to visualise Rael's story more easily. The slides are much stronger than ever before, and to a certain extent, they're an additional risk. They shift attention away from my performance somewhat, although now that I've worked with them on-stage, I think they do provide an interest-point when the going gets a little heavier lyrically."

The almost eighty-minute long Lamb show with its 3,000 slides arranged by artist Geoffrey Shaw is an important step towards one of Gabriel's most cherished goals for Genesis. Last year he told an interviewer, "I like to keep visuals in mind at the same time as lyrics and music. In the near future, I expect to see groups and artists work more closely together. I think the time is nearly ripe for the first visual artist to become a pop star. There will be situations in which the band itself becomes much less of an ego thing. If one can build the visual image stronger, one can make the fantasy situation more real and involve an audience more deeply."

But slide shows and the eventual film Peter hopes to make are expensive for a group not yet financially endowed by super-stardom, so for their earlier theatrical offerings, Gabriel was forced to rely on his considerable assets as a story-teller and pantomimist. His now famous humorous monologues, of which *The Lamb*'s inner sleeve story might be viewed as an extension, developed for purely functional reasons. "I didn't feel very at home on the stage to begin with," the mysterious multi-talent has allowed. "Audiences shocked us by not being very interested in the music at first. I started to wiggle about trying to personify the lyrics, and then we started to use the monologues when we brought twelve-string guitars into the act. There were long embarrassed silences while the guitars were tuned. The monologues gave me another outlet by which to express the fantasy."

And all of Genesis' succeeding stage shows have been literally fantastic. When Genesis first came to America to perform such bizarre Victorian epics from *Nursery Cryme* as *The Return of the Giant Hogweed*, Peter appeared in pure white satin with the pancake make-up of a mime. Although he looked like a mischievous young 19th Century lad, the prominent streak of baldness down the centre of his skull suggested he'd found a book of black magic in a dusty attic.

Then came the *Foxtrot* spectacle, during which Peter prattled even stranger prefaces dressed in a woman's ball gown topped by

a fox's head. When he sang *Get 'Em Out by Friday*, he changed personalities as easily as he doffed one hat and put on another. Come their Selling England by the Pound Tour, Genesis had firmly established themselves as the most important new self-admittedly theatrical group since the Who. Peter's impersonations of a lawn-mower and the senile degenerate of *The Musical Box* were frightening and unforgettable. It was in this show that Genesis' use of slides, combined with their very sophisticated lighting, began to take them into areas no band had ever really fully explored. The slides, of course, paralleled the concept of *Selling England by the Pound* but it was the sense of animation they conveyed that was strikingly unique.

Genesis has never been less than superb musically for all the lack of ostentation the musicians displayed. No one could deny that guitarist Steve Hackett, keyboardist Tony Banks, drummer/vocalist Phil Collins, and multi-instrumentalist Mike Rutherford were superior musical craftsmen. Yet with *Selling England by the Pound* and its slide show, Genesis had achieved an aim close to Steve Hackett's heart.

"I think eventually there will be more anonymity amongst musicians in a group, without so many people trying so desperately to find star images." Tony Banks set his sights even more specifically: "The most important thing to us is the songs, then the playing, and only then the presentation. We're not as concerned with flaunting musicianship; Yes and ELP are more dependent on solos. I'm not a soloist as such. I think of myself more as an accompanist who colours the sound."

Shortly before launching the challenging Lamb tour, Gabriel was aware that with such an awesome visual exposition as Genesis was now prepared to project, they might have even more trouble being taken seriously as musicians. "There are people who believe that the costumes, props, and slides we use are crutches to hold up crippled music," Peter told an English interviewer objectively. "But if the visual images are conceived at the time of writing, and you don't

use those visuals, then you're not allowing the audience to listen to the song in the full strength of which it was created. And that's what we're after, to give the listener as much in a song as we get from it. Visuals are only rubbish unless they are integrated with the continuity of the music," he emphasised without ambiguity.

Never has a rock theatrical presentation hypnotised an audience on so many sensory levels as *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*. Where groups from the Who to ELP impress their fans visually with walls of amplified thunder-machinery, Genesis' set is virtually bare of electric equipment. Steve Hackett and Mike Rutherford's amps are so well hidden that their music often appears to emanate from the air itself. No mountains of synthesiser technology surround Tony Banks. Aside from the panoramic three-part slide screen and an odd little rock formation at the centre of the stage, the most striking "prop" is Phil Collins' beautifully complete and well-ordered drum kit. It is almost a sculpture in itself, but, of course, its function is strictly musical.

So there is nothing onstage to get in the way of the songs themselves, which are among the most moving Genesis has yet composed. For the first time, they link the band's phantasmagorical visions to today's urban street scene. While Genesis play through their most extended built-in jam ever on *Fly on a Windshield*, Shaw's slides super-realistically smash a greatly magnified and grotesque insect against a stolid fifties Ford. The plot, the music, and the visuals become even more disturbingly surreal once Rael is sucked body and soul into Genesis' harrowing half-world. As the band plays *The Hairless Heart* Shaw's slides show a snowy white feathered heart nestled in crimson satin drapery. A rubber-gloved hand begins to shave the heart with cruel precision; the combined impact of the music and the visuals makes for one of the show's strongest emotional moments.

Peter's inner sleeve story reads: "That night Rael pictured the removal of his hairy heart and to the accompaniment of very romantic music he watched it being shaved smooth by an anonymous

stainless steel razor. The palpitating cherry-red organ was returned to its rightful place and began to beat faster as it led our hero, counting out time, through his first romantic encounter." That "romantic encounter" is described graphically in the song, *Counting Out Time*, which as Peter explained to *Circus* is a "light-hearted look at the insertion of male organs into female organs."

Although the slides, the lyrics, or the story would seem bewildering by themselves, together they have great imaginative coherency. "The album seems clearer in my head than a lot of what we've done before," Peter insists. "We look upon it as being comprised of much shorter units than before. I would like best to see *The Lamb* as a film, because that would clarify the imagery further than a performance or the record. A film is the easiest medium by which to build another reality." Yet Peter hopes audiences will be able to identify with Rael, as portrayed by Gabriel himself, following the story through his eyes, ears, and feelings. "Rael seemed a good starting point because he's surrounded by all this speed and aggression which New York has more of than any other city." Belonging to no real community save that of the streets, Rael is more susceptible to the changes Peter's plot puts him through.

Musically, Steve Hackett is pleased with the added room for improvisation that *The Lamb* has given the instrumentalists. "With this new stage show, we've left a lot of things looser than we ever have before. We're taking a chance that our spontaneous improvisations will create something we haven't had much of as yet. I think we're playing *The Lamb* even better live now than we did on record." Steve also takes issue with those critics who have felt that *The Lamb* is beyond the limit of tolerable obscurity. "There are, of course, some quite obscure parts," he concedes, "but I think that especially as regards New York City and America there are more direct statements than we've ever been willing to make before about a subject in the present time. Previously, we'd preferred to work with the past or the future."

"At any rate," as Mike Rutherford is fond of saying, audiences seem far more satisfied with *The Lamb* than Genesis could have anticipated. "I'm glad we took the risk; I think it's paid off," Peter was able to say after the first performances had garnered nothing but rave reviews. "Audiences have a way of voicing their confusion and complaints crudely during a concert, but I like the feeling of being close to a rowdy audience. I'd rather have an active audience than a stoned and passive one, even if that includes some hostility."

Genesis now seems poised on the brink of financial as well as artistic triumph. The hard core of their loyal fans is growing with each tour and every concert. Peter Gabriel feels fortunate that the band has never had to compromise for success. "Looking at the Who and Yes, it seems they weren't able to play easily entire works like *Tommy* or *Topographic Oceans*," Peter pointed out, relaxing a little now as he gazed out his hotel room window at the twinkling skyline over New York's Central Park. "So far we've been very lucky; our audiences initially tolerated *The Lamb* and now are actually positive toward it. Tonight was one of the first gigs ever in America when I felt we'd really gotten across."'

The warm picture of an artist at ease with his art and his lot in life couldn't have been farther from the truth. Gabriel had actually made up his mind to leave in 1974 and had only been coaxed back into the fold with some considerable effort. By mid 1975 the cracks could no longer be concealed and in August 1975 a front page article in *Melody Maker* broke the news that Gabriel had quit Genesis. Although the management of the group initially denied the story, they were soon forced to confront the reality of the fact that Genesis had lost what was considered to be their key asset. Chris Welch was soon on the scene with a major retrospective which appeared on 23 August 1975:

'The *Melody Maker* last week front-paged the growing doubts about Gabriel's future in the band. Reports, denied by the

management of Genesis, indicated that Gabriel was unhappy with his role as a rock star and had already left the group. And this week an official statement admitted the split in Genesis.

"They are now looking for a new singer," said the band's management. "They have a few ideas but nobody has been fixed. The group are all currently writing material and rehearsing for their new album, and they will go into the studios shortly to record. The album will be released at Christmas and Genesis will go on the road in the New Year." It is understood that Gabriel will now concentrate on straight theatrical ventures.

"We're going to carry on as if nothing happened." Brave words from drummer Phil Collins this week, upon the shock news that Gabriel has indeed quit Genesis. It will be hard for their myriad fans to accept this bombshell with quite the same equanimity. And having followed their career for the last five years, I found it hard to believe the harsh facts when the *MM* revealed last week that a split was imminent. Peter is such a unique artist, such an important figure in this extraordinary band, that it would be difficult to imagine them projecting the same magical charisma sans Gabriel. And yet Peter has gone, and the band are even now hard at work rehearsing in an Acton studio for their own follow-up album to the controversial *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*.

No more will that slim, strangely shy figure with the ability to rivet audiences with blazing eyes and bizarre costumes strut and posture in a variety of guises. No longer will Peter startle his fans with apparitions, kinetic structures, and theatrical trickery of every description. Like the inhabitant of Dr. Cagliari's cabinet, Peter Gabriel first smote our consciousness back in 1970 as a white-faced youth who found normal conversation difficult but could hold an audience entranced with poetry, lyrical surrealism, and an ever-growing repertoire of semi-diabolical characterisations. The beauty of Gabriel's Genesis was that they created a perfect balance between serious rock performance and serious visual art.

Although they were hoist by their own petard later, when audiences seemed to demand even more theatrical trickery, they held a respect painstakingly earned from the earliest days, when they built their club following. Friars, Aylesbury, was just one venue where Genesis gained almost fanatical devotion before the rock world at large was aware of their existence.

Over the last year, there were growing rumours and vibrations from within the band that not all was well. The musicians of Genesis – Phil Collins (drums), Tony Banks (keyboards), Mike Rutherford (bass and twelve-string), and Steve Hackett (lead guitar) – found it increasingly difficult to relate to the attention given to the visual aspects of Genesis, and felt their own performances were not getting the attention they deserved.

Phil Collins gave some indication of the pressures when he talked to the *MM* earlier this year: "We're all happy but there are frustrations and disappointments. The reviews of the band are most upsetting. It's a good thing that the show can get across by the visuals, but a lot of people don't listen to the music. That's a bit of a drag. No, it's not jealousy. If it were, I'd feel it towards Peter and I don't at all. It's a big drag for him as it is for us. I'd like to see Mike and Tony come out more. After all, they started the band. It must be very frustrating for them when they write a lot of the music, and get very little out of it." It was suggested that if anybody left the band it was going to be Phil, who enjoyed singing as much as drumming and liked to play on sessions with other artists. He has even taken the step of forming his own band for local gigs.

Genesis progressed in, at times, tortuous fashion. They seemed assailed by debt and doubts. While fans cheered, there would be wringing of hands behind the scenes at their quaintly eccentric and English public school approach to the business of rock. Mike Rutherford delighted in telling how in their early days the band would take hampers with them on the road, as if they were going on a picnic. "We thought it was the thing to do," said Mike.

They had a great capacity for spending money, and liked to take off each summer in order to write and ponder upon their next musical creation. Albums like *Nursery Cryme*, *Foxtrot*, and *Selling England by the Pound* were not conveyor belt products. They would spend long hours in perfecting every note and nuance, and even more attention was given to polishing the ultimate stage presentation. The band were... odd. They would delight in the fact that everybody, lead guitarist Steve Hackett included, sat down to play, while Peter stood at strategic points about the stage, sometimes motionless, sometimes embarking on a whole series of mimes and gestures that seemed to encompass everything from copulation to black magic rites. They might dress a stage all in white and use the smallest amplification cabinets possible with Hackett's guitar apparently coming from a crystal wireless set. And yet behind all the eccentricities was the solid musicianship inherent in the playing of classically-trained pianist Tony Banks, the tasteful, accurate drumming of Phil Collins, and the measured, dynamic guitar playing of Steve and Mike.

America beckoned and they toured there successfully on several occasions. But their appeal in the States seemed limited to certain areas, mainly on the East Coast. It was in Italy and France that Genesis really took off, outside of Britain. Genesis appealed to the Continentals' love of drama and mystery. In America, where they frequently had to play on tours with eminently unsuitable artists, they ran up against beer can hurling and shouts for "boogie!" All of this Genesis appeared to take with phlegmatic calm. Yet passions seethed beneath their cultivated breast.

While we keep talking, perhaps unfairly, of Genesis in the past tense, the departure of Gabriel is certainly an end of an era both for the band and British rock. Their long and distinguished career together began in 1966. It will come as a surprise to those who think of them as a relatively new phenomenon. But that was the year the four schoolboy songwriters, Tony Banks, Mike Rutherford, Peter, and original member Anthony Phillips, made a tape of their songs and

'Our albums should be in some ways like books, in that you can dip into them when you feel so inclined. Instead of making them being fashionable things you can listen to a lot one month and then discard the next.'

– Peter Gabriel

sent them to rising rock mogul, Jonathan King. This resulted in their first album, recently re-released on Decca, From Genesis to Revelation (SKL 4990). The band worked with drummers Chris Stewart and then John Silver. In 1969 they went to a country cottage to get it all together (not a word of a lie), and eventually signed with Tony Stratton-Smith, who managed the band and released their second album on his Charisma label – *Trespass*. By this time John Mayhew was on drums, but in July 1970, both Mayhew and lead guitarist Anthony Phillips were replaced by Phil Collins and Steve Hackett.

Trespass defined the slowly evolving Genesis, with one piece in particular that was to help win them a loyal following. *The Knife* was a dramatic example of their writing style, a mixture of careful arrangement and taut imagery. *The Knife* was a plea or demand for a surgeon's knife to cut the evil from men and society. And in *The Musical Box* Gabriel sang: "Now in this ugly world, it is time to destroy all this evil. Now when I give the word, are you ready to fight for your freedom, NOW!" The vision of Peter shouting his staccato "NOW!" is one that will long stay with Genesis aficionados. The album was beautifully packaged, quite daring for a small label and a virtually unknown group, and set a standard for future work, like *Nursery Cryme*, with its Paul Whitehead sleeve design, and such classic Genesis epics as *The Musical Box*, *Harold the Barrel*, and *The Return of the Giant Hogweed*.

Genesis rapidly became a cult. No other band then had such flair, and tempting touch of evil. Death, disfigurement – these were themes that recurred in the spoken introductions Peter delivered in deadpan fashion, to wild cheers. "While Henry Hamilton-Smythe was playing croquet with Cynthia Jane De Blaise-Williams, sweet-smiling Cynthia raised her mallet high and gracefully removed Henry's head..." began the verbal introduction to *The Musical Box*.

As the music developed, so did Peter's stage performance, as he brought in bizarre costumes to complement his usual black cat suit. His wriggling body struck any number of statuesque or even athletic

poses, and from kicking sand in his audience's face, he would shock them by appearing in a huge fox head, or most famous of all, a pair of bat wings, his eyes made up to glow with extraordinary ferocity. His costume was designed to enhance the fantasy tales that brought fans flocking to the various town halls and clubs where Genesis began to draw capacity crowds. One of the first occasions I saw them, they were playing to a virtually empty upstairs room at London's Ronnie Scott Club. A year later they were the toast of the Home Counties, with fans who knew every word and every gesture of their performance.

Foxtrot featured more remarkable pieces like *Get 'Em Out by Friday* (Peter suffered a lot from landlords), with such characters as Mr. Prebble and Mrs. Barrow (a tenant) who wailed: "Oh no this I can't believe, Oh Mary, they're asking us to leave." There was strong Dickensian flavour to their imagery and humour. *Watcher of the Skies* was destined to be one of the most requested items, which displayed the band's ability to utilise controlled dynamics, with new drummer Collins' working brilliantly in unison with Tony Banks' doom-laden Mellotron. Virtually the whole of the second side featured their first extended work, *Supper's Ready*, another milestone and portent.

This 1972 release was followed a year later with *Selling England by the Pound*, which contained their first hit single *I Know What I Like (In Your Wardrobe)* which had such commercial appeal that even Tony Blackburn played it on Radio One, and Phil Collins' vocal outing on *More Fool Me*. But *The Battle of Epping Forest* and *Cinema Show* never quite equalled the magic of their earlier works, nor transferred as well to stage production. A "Live" album came out the same year, a rare burst of activity for the band, and featured a compilation of their best-loved songs like *Watcher of the Skies*, *Get 'Em Out by Friday*, *The Return of the Giant Hogweed*, *The Musical Box* and *The Knife* (Charisma Class 1).

Then in 1974 came the result of a year's work, the adventurous *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*, which moved to New York for its

setting and influence and became the basis of their by now hugely extravagant stage show, complete with lights, smoke, and back projections. For some fans it was a disappointment, more calculating in its surrealism and lacking the stealth and subtlety of earlier works. It was a successful double album, and the music took on greater effect in the live appearances the band made throughout America, Europe, and Britain. But Peter was disappointed at the criticism it received and the stage show became more and more difficult to bring off to full effect. And the chief character, Rael, did not rest as naturally on his shoulders as some of his more English creations.

Nevertheless, they performed the work brilliantly in Paris last March and not quite so well in London a few weeks later. "It's quite a barrage of words and there should be an award for people who go through!" Peter said deferentially about the work, but described it as: "A series of events that could happen to somebody who doesn't even know his subconscious exists."

Genesis' career can be measured by their many great concerts that became events in the rock calendar. Like their New York debut in December in 1972 when they won over a wondering American audience; Reading Festival in 1973; their five nights at London's Drury Lane in January of 1974; and Empire Pool last April when *The Lamb* made its first British appearance. But their finest moments were at the Rainbow Theatre, where the band could utilise the stage facilities in a relatively compact environment. It was not really true that audiences did not perceive the musical ability of the band and were completely blinded by Gabriel's role. They could roar like controlled thunder, and the tones employed by Hackett and Banks were among the most distinctive in rock.

But whatever the reasons for the split, and doubtless all will be revealed soon, Genesis have emphasised that there is no personal animosity. They simply want to go their separate ways. Said Phil Collins: "We were not stunned by Peter's departure because we had known about it for quite a while. We're going to carry on and we've

been rehearsing for three weeks for the new album. This hasn't hit us suddenly, we've been talking about it for some time, and I think there will be room for both Genesis and Peter on his own. No – there were no musical differences. I don't really know what to say about it at the moment. There were no reasons for anything," he added mysteriously. "It was Peter's decision and I can only emphasise that we are carrying on as if nothing happened."

Bands have recovered from surgery of this kind before. It remains to be seen if the public can accept the knife used in such drastic fashion.'

Chris Welch's piece may have all the hallmarks of an obituary but at least he gave the survivors the benefit of the doubt. Most observers simply wrote the band off as dead and buried. To them, losing Gabriel meant Genesis had indeed lost a great writer, performer and charismatic front man who was patently irreplaceable and Genesis were therefore history. The more open minded sections of the music world fortunately waited to see who would be brought in as a replacement before declaring the band to be finished.

In the absence of an immediate replacement, the critics began to circle like sharks in a feeding frenzy. Without Gabriel's unique contribution it seemed the band was finished. For the cynics it was clearly the end of an era, and so it was to prove, but only of the opening era in the Genesis story. As history records, Phil Collins stepped out from behind the drum kit and his superb vocal contributions and exuberant stage persona added a new and completely unexpected extra dimension which took the band in new and exciting directions. For many fans this proved to be a second golden era of Genesis. Five great albums produced from 1976 to 1980 provided the building blocks that saw Genesis develop from progressive icons to genuine superstars. Album sales in Phase II of Genesis' career certainly eclipsed anything which the group had achieved in the Gabriel years but the arguments over whether the

band ever again scaled the same creative heights look set to roll on for ever. Some people say Genesis were at their best with Gabriel, others say they were at their best without him... most of us don't care either way; for the real fans the simple truth is Genesis will always be the best in any era.

GENESIS FROM THE INSIDE

An archive interview with guitarist Steve Hackett

STEVE HACKETT

Place of Birth: Pimlico, London, England
Date of Birth: 12 February 1950
First professional groups: Canterbury Glass, Sarabande
First recording group: Quiet World. One album – *The Road* (1970)
Main guitar played: Gibson Les Paul
Joined Genesis: December 1970
Departed from Genesis: October 1977
Genesis albums featuring Steve Hackett: *Nursery Cryme* (1971), *Foxtrot* (1972), *Live* (1973), *Selling England by the Pound* (1973), The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway (1974), *Trick of the Tail* (1976), *Wind and Wuthering* (1976), *Seconds Out* (1976)

Steve Hackett's inventive, fluid guitar style became an integral feature of the classic Genesis line-up that produced some of the greatest progressive rock music ever recorded. He also became an important visual element of the band in concert, as, seated and bespectacled, he provided a perfect counterpoint to the theatrics of singer Peter Gabriel.

The interview with Steve Hackett reprinted below was conducted shortly after the release in 1974 of *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*, an album considered by many to be the finest work by a band at their creative peak. The tone of the interview is clearly positive, and Hackett's enthusiasm for the band is as evident as his restless desire to push back the boundaries of the guitar.

In the modern era, when effects boxes featuring hundreds of different sounds are available to all guitarists, Hackett's determination thirty years ago to make his guitar sound different seems particularly far-sighted.

Q How did you join up with Genesis in 1970?

Well, I simply advertised in one of the English music papers. Peter phoned me up in response and I went along to see them at a gig. They'd just replaced Anthony Phillips, my predecessor.

Q Was Anthony Phillips only on that first album?

No, he was on *From Genesis to Revelation* and then *Trespass*. They'd got a guy called Mick Barnard, who they weren't really happy with – they'd auditioned a lot of people and they were getting fed up, so they ended up accepting somebody they weren't really happy with. When I went to see them I could see why! I felt that he was the weak link.

I did two weeks of rehearsals with them, and then we played our first gig. There were a lot of similarities between the things that they were doing and the things that they wanted to do, and the things that I had already done. Quite often I use things with my band now

that I wrote a long time ago... fortunately there was a lot of parallel development between Genesis's ideas and mine before we joined forces.

Q How did your style develop after you joined the band?
Well, obviously I was very influenced by the others because, to a very large extent, I am a fan of each of them and the things that they do; each of them impress me. It's really weird, I find, in a band where you're that into the other musicians.

Q Why do you sit down onstage?
It's because of the equipment, mainly – to have all that easily at my disposal.

Q Aside from being close to your pedals, do find it easier to play seated?
Yes, I find it easier playing sitting down; it just feels closer.

Q Have you been influenced by Robert Fripp of King Crimson? He sits down too, and your styles seem similar.
Sometimes the styles are similar. A lot of it is parallel development, and I admit the influence, certainly. I could put several guitarists in the same category, especially Fripp, Pete Banks, Jan Akkerman – guitarists who are able to sketch in as many different styles as possible, without necessarily being a virtuoso in any of them!

Q So that's the type of playing that you identify with?
Yes. To really be a virtuoso classical guitarist, I think you have got to devote yourself one-hundred-percent to that. Flamenco is the same. It takes real dedication. Jazz, too, although the boundaries of that are less strictly defined. I just find that I am influenced by all those kinds of music, and I'm a bit schizophrenic in the way that I'll interpret them.

Q Because you have to come up with so many different styles of playing in the music, do you ever find that one area is neglected?
Well, my technique is improving all the time, and I think that I am playing better now than I have ever played before. I don't consider that I have reached a peak, so techniques keep being added. What I do find is, because I haven't got hung up going through too many exercises laid down by other people, that I've developed new techniques.

Q How hard is it for you to come up with a sound for a particular track? Or do you ever have pre-conceived ideas of what you want the guitar to sound like before you've even heard the track?
Some things are easier to do than others. On the last album I left everything up to the last minute, but I found finalising my guitar parts to be virtually impossible. I was continually changing what I was playing, and I did a lot more improvised work because of that.

Q So, every time you sit down a song might come out different?
I hope so, yes. I'm writing a solo album at the moment as well.

Q Is it going to be a Genesis-sounding album or will it be something totally different?
Well, it will probably sound like certain elements of Genesis, because I've written things for the band, so there are bound to be some similarities, but it will be much more instrumental and ideally I'd like it released in about a year's time.

Q Why a year?
I've thought about it a lot, and I think that the others will be coming out with solo albums, too. I expect that the next Genesis album will be released before any of the solo releases, though, and as far as I'm concerned it's very much something that I'll try and fit into the Genesis routine.

Q What is it there you can put on a solo album that you couldn't put on a Genesis album?

Well solo guitar pieces, obviously – certain little things that are almost like technical exercises, which don't have any particular place in Genesis. It's just a case of having total artistic control over something, which all of us need to do. It's very therapeutic, I think. We work very closely with each other and we've got very broad tastes musically, so it can't all be encompassed within Genesis. We have succeeded in keeping everyone happy enough so far, but there's still always a little bit more which you feel as though you would like to do. It's just that there are so many things that I've written which have been around for a long while, and they kind of haunt me. They don't go away, because they don't find a home with the band.

Q Will any of the other guys in Genesis be on the album?

I expect so. Who knows?

Q Who are some of the guitarists that you listen to now, other than the ones you mentioned earlier? Are there people outside of that field that you listen to or that you admire?

I can't think of that many. I listen to acoustic guitarists a lot. Every time you hear an acoustic guitar being used in the middle of some things, I sit up and take note. There's something magical about the sound of an acoustic guitar that I'm drawn back to again and again. It's a very natural sound, just six or twelve strings...

Robert Fripp said that to be a truly good electric guitarist, you really cannot be a really good acoustic player. He thinks that being an acoustic guitarist is a kind of an anachronism! I can see what he means.

Q Do you play any other instruments besides guitar?

The harmonica...

Q Do you have any interest in picking up other instruments? Say, the flute or the violin?
Not yet. Not for a while. I could see that happening later, but at the moment I'm more interested in exploring the sounds that are at your disposal with one instrument – all the effects things that a guitar can be put through to make it sound like a piano, make it sound like a harp, or a voice. You can make a guitar sound like so many things. I'm more interested in the possibilities of one note with a guitar than I am in picking up other instruments. I managed to get a sound like a drum from a guitar, for example, by using a fuzz box. Actually, the stabbing sound at the beginning of *The Battle of Epping Forest* on *Selling England by the Pound* – the marching soldiers at the beginning of that were done with a guitar through a fuzz box and then an octave divider, so you had the distortion from the fuzz box and the inter-modulation between the strings, as though you weren't holding down any of the notes. That's like a number of impure processes to get something completely removed from what's normally known as guitar. It's using guitar as a means to paint sonic pictures, I guess.

Q So that's where you see yourself taking the guitar? Doing those types of things?
Yeah, I suppose it's being wilfully perverse, really, but through perversity and obscurity I'm hoping to find a few new perspectives.

Only three years later, Hackett and Gabriel had both left Genesis. Gabriel had left in 1975, in part because of resentment in the group over his ever-growing public profile and the mistaken public perception that he was the creative force behind the band. Perhaps Hackett's departure created fewer headlines, but it was no less important for the future of Genesis; once he had gone, the band's albums started to move away from the progressive rock template towards a pop format that brought increased commercial success.

Hackett's second solo effort, 1978's *Please Don't Touch*, was acclaimed by the critics. Moreover, it confirmed to the music-buying public that he had contributed enormously to the signature Genesis sound over the years. Interviewed in the USA during that year, Hackett candidly discussed the group's disintegration, his new solo album, and his hopes for the future.

Q Let's go right back – when did your solo album *Please Don't Touch* start taking shape?
Well, it started taking shape in my mind a long, long time ago, certainly before I left the band, but the stuff on it is fairly current, stuff that I've written in the last year, although some of it dates back a lot further than that... not very much of it mind you!

Q Some of this might have been Genesis material?
It might well have been done by Genesis, had they shown more enthusiasm about some of the other things that I'd written. If I look back on the last two albums I did with the band [*A Trick of the Tail* and *Wind & Wuthering*], I think I can say that the selection of material wasn't entirely in accordance with my own views as to what was outstanding and what wasn't.

Q Specifically?
You mean which ones I didn't like? Well, on *Wind and Wuthering* there's *All in a Mouse's Night* – I'd say that I haven't heard too many people say 'Wow' about that one, you know. Also, *One For the Vine*, which I know is a lot of people's favourite track, but I personally think that it's very fragmentary. It keeps breaking down, going back to the piano each time – just when it sounds like it's going to get into something. It's just the whole stiffness of it, really, the whole rigidness in the approach of something that was written and conceived by one person and performed by other people, but which doesn't really swing. I remember Phil saying, when he was asked to give an honest

assessment, 'No. I don't really like it either.' It's always very difficult when you get one writer whose material dominates, and the rest of the band is interpreting that writer's ideas.

Personally, what I try to do now is – and what I tried to do on the solo album was – to make sure that everyone who worked on it was as happy with their performance as possible. If there was something wrong with it, I wanted to know why. And if they didn't like a song, I wouldn't ask them to do it. In fact, I had the reverse problem on *Icarus Ascending*, which Richie Havens sings on the album. Steve Walsh wanted to sing it, and I had a problem, because I'd already given it to Richie. It's a pity, you know. I'd love to do two versions and release them. It would be great to mix them all up.

But I'd settled on people for certain songs, and I think I made good choices. I'm far happier with the singing on this than on the first album. In fact, there's no comparison really. I worked very closely with all the people on it, and the problem, if anything, is that because I worked for four months on the album, I need a breather from it now in order to be able to go back and enjoy it. Every time I hear it now I just think of all the sweat and the effort we put in to make it happen! It's not over yet, either. It's still in the making, as far as I'm concerned. At no stage of the project have I sat back and said to myself, 'Well, that's fine, now I can leave it.' You can't do that in my opinion. I certainly can't afford to.

Q So those people like Richie Havens and Steve Walsh were guys that you specifically wanted?

Oh yeah, they were people that I particularly wanted to do it. I went through a lot of singers to come up with the choice of Steve for those songs. I'd been thinking for a long time and listening to a lot of albums – who the hell can I use? Who can hit notes? Who can really sing in tune? Who can really do harmonies?

Richie was another kettle of fish. He had always been my favourite singer, and I asked him because I had the ambition to work with

Richie Havens some day. You never imagine that you're ever going to get to work with anybody that you place on that kind of pedestal, but he was also completely right for the songs.

Richie and I met up in London. We were both playing gigs there, and I made sure that I made personal contact with him. We became friends before we worked together, which was a nice thing. It's good to be able to say that you have friends in the business – well, insofar as you can have friends when you're both racing all over the world. You have an intermingling of ideas and feelings, and I think Richie and I got to know each other's feelings pretty well.

Q Did he know your work?

I don't think he really knew of my work, no. I think he knew and liked what Genesis had done, because his keyboard player, Dave Lebolt, had made him aware of our sound as a group. Dave was on *Please Don't Touch*, too, so there was good communication between us all. I'm very pleased with the way it turned out.

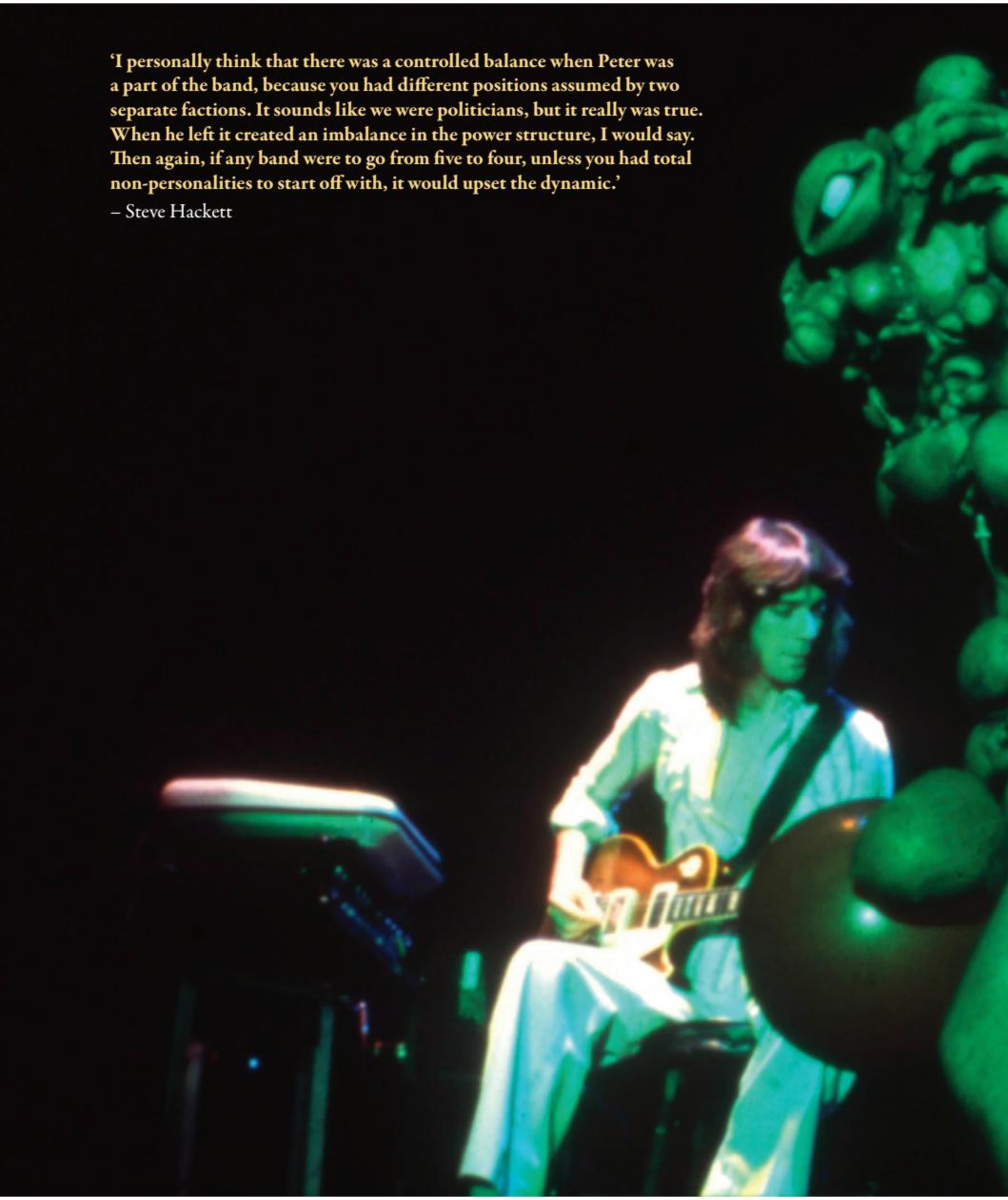
Q You're managing yourself at the moment? Does that bring added pressures?

Well, sometimes I wish I could just let it just happen. I wish I could just say, 'That's it. I'm pleased with it. Fine, here it is,' and hand it over to someone else, but because, as you say, I'm managing myself at the moment, there are still a hundred-and-one things that still have to be done, like trying to make sure the album is in the shops, making sure that radio displays are handled properly, that promotional films are done, that singles are released, that contracts are sorted out, and business stuff like that. I've also got to dream up new marketing ideas myself, because I've discovered that if I don't come up with the ideas, then no one does, even in a group.

To be honest, I was tired of people not carrying out their functions, not doing their jobs to the best of their ability. I feel far more qualified to do these things. One example was the production on

'I personally think that there was a controlled balance when Peter was a part of the band, because you had different positions assumed by two separate factions. It sounds like we were politicians, but it really was true. When he left it created an imbalance in the power structure, I would say. Then again, if any band were to go from five to four, unless you had total non-personalities to start off with, it would upset the dynamic.'

– Steve Hackett



those Genesis albums. I know that Dave Hentschel got a lot of credit for much of the production work, but I don't think that in comparison to the live performances which the band were giving at the time, the recorded works ever came anywhere near to sounding as good as they should have.

Q No?

No, and the basic problem was that the band spent far, far too little time in the studio, and far too much time on the road. I think that the albums should have been approached far more carefully and critically, and perhaps then the album sales would have reflected that.

Q Care to expand on that?

Well, in my opinion there was very little time spent in the way that it should have been. For one thing, I don't like to write in rehearsal rooms. To me, rehearsal rooms are usually too hot, too cold, too dark, or too smelly. I sit there facing three other guys that are at best colleagues, at worst competitors. I was sitting there knowing that when a group writing session doesn't work, it's diluting each one of the individuals' ideas. I suppose when it does work you sometimes have the magic factor, but for me, I was getting far more out of writing on my own. I really felt that my creativity was only coming out when I wasn't surrounded by other individuals all screaming at once.

I find that I need tranquillity, peace, and quiet. Maybe it sounds mad, but sometimes I will get up early in the morning and write because that's the only time when I know that I can work without interference. It's very important for me to be shut off from what's going on.

I also feel better working on my own in the studio, where I can control the whole thing. I tell you, when a group is producing themselves it really is a case of people looking out for themselves – 'I think I should be louder!'

So that one person's performance is made louder, and then the others say, 'Well, now you're so loud, I now can't hear myself!'

So before you know it, the faders are all up at the top, and the engineer then says, 'Look, hold it a minute, fellas. We're not able to mix any dynamic level in, so I'll start again and back them all off.' Then everyone starts getting grumpier and twitchier and more and more uptight, and you get this whole emotional thing going on. Anyway, that's my own completely unbiased opinion!

Q And that's what happened with Genesis?

Well, let's just say that I can't fault the production on my own albums, but I can fault it on the Genesis records. Actually it's the separation, mainly. Separation's a big problem – separation of sound.

Q It's hard to do?

It's hard to do, especially when someone else is saying, 'I don't like sounds when they're placed left and right of the stereo, I like them in the middle.'

If you can't place the sound properly in the sort of spectrum that stereo gives you, then you're going to run into this problem. Maybe it's a little too technical, but it means that all the instruments in the middle tend to blur, and because of the vocal tone which we used with Genesis, usually with a double-tracked vocal, it gave us a bit of a conundrum. If the singer has a particularly rough edge to his voice – and both Peter and Phil have that quality – then you've got a slightly fuzzy effect already. It makes the lyrics hard to distinguish, and if you add echo to that, either a close echo or some sort of stereo repeat, then eventually you've got a whole kind of mush in the middle.

I know I'm very critical of everything that Genesis have done in the past, but then again I think that one of my roles in the band was to be a cross between an in-house critic and a coach, to point out to the others that certain things were possible, that the studio wasn't an enemy and it could be reasoned with.

Q And the others didn't always listen to you?

Well, bands have an in-built paranoia, and I'm not surprised. Alliances are formed, sometimes unwittingly, sometimes deliberately, to make sure certain people get their own way. Everyone gets very nervous and they're all looking out for the guy who'll do anything to keep the peace. I think you know that most groups are all about that, about power struggles. Maybe that's not the right word...

Q Politics?

Politics, yeah, that's more accurate. It's all about personal rights! A lot of it is about finding someone's weakness, and playing upon that in order to strengthen your own position. If you can instil insecurity into somebody else...

I think it happened with the Beatles, too. In *Let It Be* you can see exactly what's going on. You can see John Lennon with a hangdog expression being given a talking to by Paul McCartney, who is in turn complaining that George Harrison is not toeing the line. Paul is saying, 'I really think that we should be doing this film,' with his own cameraman over his own shoulder.

How would you feel if you were telling me something and I was disagreeing with you on celluloid – it's a hell of a thing to do. Dylan did it with the first British tour in *Don't Look Back*. He's actually negotiating with the cameraman filming over his shoulder! If there's anything more intimidating than a gun, it's probably a camera.

Q Was the band weakened when Peter left or was it actually strengthened?

I personally think that there was a controlled balance when Peter was a part of the band, because you had different positions assumed by two separate factions. It sounds like we were politicians, but it really was true. When he left it created an imbalance in the power structure, I would say. Then again, if any band were to go from five to four, unless you had total non-personalities to start off with, it would upset

the dynamic. I wouldn't say that the individuals were any weaker, but I'd say that the band, although it came out with very good things subsequently, wasn't able to break new ground as readily. The people that were trying to move things on were becoming a dying breed, shall we say, almost becoming extinct within that little Genesis world.

Q What, in your opinion, was the group's most creative album?
I would say that, for me, the most creative album that the band did was *Selling England by the Pound*. I think it showcased both the song strengths of the band and the playing talent as well. Occasionally the instruments were allowed to breathe, you know, with unaccompanied things. I think that the odd solo was too long. I think that the keyboard solo in *Cinema Show* went on interminably – on one chord, in 7/8, for ages! But apart from that I think it showcased the individual abilities pretty nicely.

Mind you, I know that Peter wasn't very pleased with that album, and I know that Phil wasn't happy with it, either. In fact, no one was happy with it, apart from me! I also prefer my guitar playing on it. In fact, I decided on that album that it was going to be more playing and less talking about it, so I just got on with the job and didn't bother to try and sell my songs to the band. I think there were some stronger solos, because you had fewer competitors in the song-writing sense. I had a more riffy kind of attitude to that album.

On the previous albums I had always gotten heavily into the lyric writing, and I decided to opt out of that role and just get on with playing. I wanted to get back into playing guitar again. Having said that, now I'm solo I'll have to be wary of overdoing the guitar; it might bore people to death. I mean, you listen to an Antony Phillips [Hackett's predecessor in Genesis] album – there's a lot of guitar work, but Jesus!

Q With you gone, will Genesis cease to be a band?
Genesis is a three-piece now.

Q They're still going to do that?
Yeah, they're going out on the road. Well, they're going out with two other people. The other two will just be employees, though. I don't think it's healthy.

Q You'd feel happier if Genesis didn't exist anymore?
Personally, I say let it lie. It strikes me that there must be some insecurity if they want to stick with the name that they started off with. Occasionally, I was accused of being the one who wanted to make as much money as possible, but in fact I'm the person who's said goodbye to it. I haven't got any guarantee that'll I'll be able to sell records from now on. I think that they should examine their own motives again – certainly Tony should. After all, it was him that said, 'I'm not in this business to make as much money as possible – unlike some people,' while very pointedly looking at me, referring to me wanting to do solo albums at the same time as wanting to be part of Genesis.

The big thing is that I was told, 'Don't be a naughty boy and just jolly well get on with being a part of the group. We don't want you to do solo albums, you know, not even in your spare time.'

We had a lot of meetings and discussions and arguments, and the whole thing became so cramped and so tedious that there was only one course I could follow. After you've done one album yourself, an album which you're very pleased with and has sold well, you crave your own audience. There's no way that you are suddenly going to take a step back and accept a less responsible role. I've always wanted to work at my full potential. That's hard to do in a band when only a percentage is required, and even then there's no guarantee of that percentage being fully utilised.

Q So if they'd let you go ahead and do these albums you could still be with the band?
It is possible, I suppose, but on a personal level, they couldn't accept

it. So I might still be working with those people, but maybe it wouldn't be called Genesis. I don't know. It's too bad. It's too bad, especially when Phil was doing albums and gigs with another band [jazz-fusion outfit Brand X], so it was totally hypocritical of them to try and restrain me in any way – plus I don't like the idea of anybody putting themselves in the position of my employer. That's what they were doing by prohibiting my involvement with anything else. It was totally unacceptable. This is rock 'n' roll and I don't have to take that shit from anybody anymore!

Q What do you think of Brand X?

I think it's a nice name for a band. I saw them at the Roxy and I thought they were really hot – far, far better than any of their albums. It's a shame. I've seen a lot of concerts recently when I've seen something which is very spontaneous, but you know damn well that it will never get on the record like that. So many live gigs and live situations have never been captured fully, and sometimes it's the case that, when a visual performance is very, very strong, it doesn't always translate into a recorded performance.

I often think that they are very separate. For instance, a band like The Tubes are definitely suited to a live environment. Devo, too, who strike me as having a very unique approach to stage performance. These are great live acts, and that's fine in one sense, but to get it down on record is hard. It works the other way. In the case of ELO, for example, who leave a lot to be desired in terms of their performance, on record they seem to totally make it.

Maybe it's because one person has got total control. It must be hell for the other individuals that are involved in it, but it does make for a unique concept that can be exploited to the full.

Or maybe it's the one artist-one producer relationship, which is one of the things I've got most respect for, like the Phil Spector approach. It never sounds like an unnatural performance, but you know that it's him behind it all. I just wonder what the Ronettes would have

sounded like by themselves, you know, without him to produce them. I really do.

Of course, the two are dependant on each other. You've got to have the raw material to start off with. I don't think that Tina Turner has ever sounded so good as when she worked with Spector. She's got a very rough quality to her voice that requires a particular kind of echo; to me she's got a lot of rough edges, but a certain kind of echo gives it the kind of gloss, smooths it out, gives it a different kind of dimension and turns it into something else which is quite unique and it becomes beautiful. It's the combination of the two that strikes me, and, you know, working with Ritchie Havens, maybe I unconsciously applied the same sort of philosophy.

Q You used Chester [Thompson, long-time live drummer for Genesis, as heard on Three Sides Live] because you knew him from the band days?

He's the most comfortable drummer I've ever worked with, yeah. Genesis certainly benefited from his inclusion – it really started to feel comfortable with Chester. With Bill [Bruford], I felt that he often used a piece of music to showcase his own talents, rather than concentrating on the piece of music.

Chester's the sort of guy who, even when he was just rehearsing with the band, would be awake until seven in the morning listening to tapes to try to get it right. He felt very much like he was an actor filling in another man's shoes. He was the most diligent musician -very anxious to try and get it right, and when we were rehearsing and recording together I found that his memory for arrangements was incredible. When Genesis rehearsed with him for the first time, he'd been told what tracks to learn, and I thought it was going to be similar to how it was with Bill – 'here we go!' We'd had to teach the guy from the word go. But Chester was a revelation. I mean, he was so clued up on the material, but he'd never even ever heard the band beforehand. I was very impressed. It takes a band a long time to get

to the point where it's ready to go – everyone forgets their parts and stuff – but Chester was right there. He was in there with his charts, committing it to memory, committing it to the charts, committing it to tape – a very together approach. It's one of the reasons why I went to America to record. I was very interested in working with any bass player that Chester recommended.

Q Where did you record the album?
Partly in Cherokee, Louisiana, but mostly in England.

Q The sound of the record is very English, which I think makes it far superior to American-sounding albums.
Well, I don't know about that. American rhythm sections – I just prefer them – and I prefer American singers, I really do. I think that they work harder at it, they do it quicker, and they sing more in tune. To me it's much cleaner.

Crosby, Stills and Nash – there's one Englishman in there but to all intents and purposes it's an American thing. You have that heritage here; I don't think that England has it. I mean, the best vocal band England has ever had is the Beatles, without a doubt, but over here you've had many. You've had the Beach Boys, you've had Crosby, Stills and Nash, you've had the Byrds – I mean, there are just millions of them. You've got Kansas happening at the moment, with Steve Walsh, who's one of the best exponents of vocal harmony. It's the brightness of the voice that I find is lacking in England...

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With the departure of Peter Gabriel, Genesis launched into a new era. Although many wrote them off, there was a long and exciting road ahead of the band. Join us in the next issue to follow their ascent into the rock stratosphere with *Music Legends Special Editions – Genesis 1975–1977.*

GENESIS

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